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Monthly Poetry and Prose Magazine

GloMag

Edited by Glory Sasikala

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ABOUT GLOMAG

GloMag now brings out two hard copy versions per year, one in February and one in August. While there are no visual aids in the hard copy versions, the online version is enhanced by pictures accompanying the writings and the profiles. GloMag Online is the coming together of writers in their diverse manifestations, thoughts, and expressions, and the visual interpretation of these. Sometimes the original thought of the writer gets completely lost in the interpretations. Visual aids help us to decipher the writer's intentions, and at the same time, enhance the reading experience.

Either way, GloMag remains euphoria, engaging all your senses at once. Perhaps you are sitting in solitude beneath a bough, besides a lake, and you turn the pages. Suddenly, a hundred voices are talking to you, capturing your thoughts. Time stands still, and you become engrossed, oblivious to anything but these beautiful writings, expressions, and pictures. Your soul dances in ecstasy, participates in a cosmic experience, it sways and chants. Somewhere someone is telling you about duality, someone tells you about a forlorn house without music, someone shows you how to love, and someone raises questions about existence itself.

And when you come to, the world is still there, the lake is still there, the birds are chirping, shadows have lengthened. Nothing feels the same! You are not the same! You get up reluctantly. It's time to go home.

~ ***Glory Sasikala***

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A MAN AT THE GRAVEYARD

A man has fallen from the sky

And his good neighbours

In flawless wear have

Flocked to bury him.

Graveyard is spectacular with tall bamboo,

Here is a neem, there is a banana or shimul

Dry leaves, creepers, green patches fighting at base.

Sky is overcast, and suddenly it begins to drizzle,

Some claim Allah is great, some look sideways,

Janaza prayer is made in rain and then

Hearse is slowly silently carried to the grave.

Good neighbours line to thrice offer

Fistful of soil over the dead, just then

I see a man by the mound of the grave,

Singular in attire and ways

He looks at each solemn face

And a quizzical smile he spreads.

Good neighbours impatient in ritual wait

While he freely moves among tired legs

And counts contours of each face

Why is he deviant from the rest?

Is he mad or…?

Abu Siddik: I am a writer, widely published in India and abroad. I reside in Murshidabad, India. I work as Assistant Professor. One of my poetry books has recently been translated into Hindi. Website: www.abusiddik.com

OPEN YOUR LIPS AND SING

I (du matin)

Morn hours

    Younger lads pump

water for

    Teeth brushing,

baths with cold water—

the elderly boys shave…

    And I sit at a very short

rectangular table on the porch.

The scene toward the field,

glossed with terrific elegance.

I, dark hair and black eyes wear a

    shirt white to gleam in the

light and honestly not bored

Adnan Shafi: He is a poet, writer, columnist, translator, short story writer, reviewer, blogger, motivational speaker, ghazal-writer, and editor from Kashmir. He has co-authored and been featured in many national and international anthologies. He also writes articles in newspapers. Currently, he is working as an acquiring editor for British Magazine (Writerly) and the USA magazine (ILA). He has won several awards. He was awarded the Shakespeare Medal for his literary merit as well as the ‘Best achiever award’ in the field of English literature as the title 'Best English poet’.

GOING NOWHERE

Among the naked branches

A few stars glow in dead silence

Drops of rain and autumn leaves

Among the clouds, I write a poem.

Daydreams are my horrible fantasies,

Wildest dreams are my painful imaginations,

The greatest sorrow will bury my joys again

Death talk “I wish you could answer me...”

Wealthy I am with so many tears to share

I fall madly in love with a hundred-year-old coffin

I don't have to shut myself and continue to

open more wounds on my own, day and night.

The blind shadow breaks the mute mirror

Everything goes blurry in my happiness

I am curious and helpful as I make you

smile, while I am instant to go nowhere.

Ahmad Al-Khatat: He was born in Baghdad, Iraq. His work has appeared in print and online journals globally. He has poems translated into several languages such as Farsi, Chinese, Spanish, Albanian, and Romanian. He has published some poetry chapbooks, and a collection of short stories. He has been nominated for Best of the Net 2019 and was also nominated for the Pushcart Price 2020.

THIS MOMENT

At a time like this,

you can shut up in the middle of a soap bubble

and soar high to a place

in which the wind writes

white hieroglyphs on the blue of the sky

and arranges images from clouds.

There, silence plays like music

and the power of the cosmos can be felt

And then you have to see

a rainbow in a drop of water

and fall with the rain on a tree branch,

rustle with a chorus of leaves

and rest on a soft spider web.

In this moment, the joy of life is hidden

—the greatest mystery of the universe

Alicja Maria Kuberska: I am a poet, novelist, writer, journalist, and editor residing in Poland, in Inowrocław. I work as a financial auditor. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published one novel and a few poetry volumes, both in English and Polish. My books have been translated into many languages.

A DREAM

My dreams mostly have
plenty of sunlight.
The one in which you came
had the mid-afternoon looks.
The glare was about to dim.

You were oiling the nozzle of
an air gun with practiced ease.
There was a pretty little girl, her
identity promising familiarity, her
presence exuding a known warmth.

See how they overlap in their beings—
these non-beings of promises and dreams!
How they conjure up the story of a day,
as good as real, yet merely a dream
replete with sunlight, child, you and me.

Amanita Sen: Amanita has two collections of poems: ‘Candle In My Dream’ and ‘What I Don’t Tell You’. Her works have been published in numerous journals in India and abroad. She is a mental health professional and lives in Kolkata.

SEEDS OF DEVOTION

Spices are nice when you add
to delicate flames with devotion.
Heart inside sings – in hush
of silence that only lush peacocks
understand when their wings
span Indra’s net at dusk.

Listen how sun’s rays water fields
with flavors of nourishment,
as Love dreams over crest of dunes
in utter stillness, Tender Time
cannot wash its fingers – Debris
sits on its haunches watchful,

then resists, drops into oblivion
of poet's mind – Space so vast
sand dunes roll into rest time.

Time that never rests – unceasingly

makes its music mean

something even stars ache for… this

rain that succors dry heart

with devotion – then seeds sprout.

Ambika Talwar: She is an India-born educator, author, artist, and wellness consultant whose ecstatic poetry "bridges worlds." She is the winner of the Great India Poetry Contest (2018) and Pushcart nominee. She has authored *4 Stars & 25 Roses* (for her father); *My Greece: Mirrors & Metamorphoses*, a poetic-spiritual travelogue. Her poems appear in several national and international anthologies. Ambika has won an award for a short film. Recently retired as professor emerita (English), she also practices a fusion of holistic modalities. She is board-member of CSPS (California State Poetry Society) and lives in USA and India. ***https://www.creativeinfinities.com***

A FICTITIOUS INTERVIEW OF A WOMANIZER

Interviewer: We have come to know that you do have a lot of affairs at the same time. Is it true? If it is, then can you please explain why?

Womanizer: Honestly speaking, there are two things I have a weakness for—books and women. So yeah, it is true. I have a lot of affairs with them simultaneously.

Interviewer: And we have also come to know that you cannot make any of your affairs last long. If it is true, can you please tell us why?

Womanizer: Yes, it is quite true. Because I cannot be reading for years the same book. No matter how good the book is.

Interviewer: Then, what will the woman be doing once you have left her? Is she worthless now?

Womanizer: No, she isn't. If a book is good enough, it will never lack readers.

Aminool Islam: I am a poet residing in Bogra, Bangladesh. I work as an English language instructor. I have contributed to various anthologies. I am currently the sub-editor of a literary magazine named Neeharika.

THE QUTUB

A tall minaret holding the skies and beyond was not just a dream of conscience seekers but

ardent reachers in a cosmic journey of endless passion, like a kite flying over Jama Masjid

disappearing in clouds, like a passion reaching its stranger time zenith, like hushed voices

calling us back again, like summers at Delhi treading forgotten alleys of lost love and yet the minor always stood touching the glint of many faraway stars, touching our dreams, touching your laughter, touching your eyes as always.

Amitabh Mitra: He is an Indian-born South African physician, poet and artist. He is one of the most widely published poets globally.

SING A SONG

Sing a song of gamblers

Pockets full of dice

All the poor folk wanted

Was some bags of rice

When the bags were opened

Bullets began to sting

Bombs destroyed the villages

Drones were on the wing

The rich were in the stock exchange

Counting out their money

They knew their bread was buttered

They had plenty of honey

Another part of Mother Earth

Became an ugly scar

But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—

It was a lovely War!

(A Reinvented Nursery Rhyme by Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia)

Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia: I am a retired civil servant, but at heart, a poet and teacher. I write, mostly poetry, in English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. I was awarded the NISSIM International Poetry Award (First Prize) 2019 and then the Reuel International Award (First Prize) 2020 for Non-Fiction Prose by The Significant League, a well-known Creative Writing Group on Facebook. Recently, the Destiny International Community of Poets based out of Wakefield, England, UK declared me Winner of their Poet of the Year 2020 as well as Critic of the Year 2020 recognitions.

RUMINIATION BY A RIVER

The hushed breeze here in a groggy afternoon
awoke to beating of drums and percussions
savage exultation of patriarchal demons
ripped the unclad sky
rippled through the serene river flowing by;
the living carcass of a young woman
in bridal attire is dragged
from a cobwebbed frame of history
to her husband's funeral pyre
destiny had knifed through
the vermilion parting of her hair
an irony to the infinite lifeline on her palm—
the miasma of three score old grilled flesh
seethed in her numbed sense
in a haze she faltered towards the steps of the ghat
contriving a plunge in river to duck underwater,
a hue and cry rose, predatory hands overpowered

priest’s fiery chant dramatically

in consonance with leaping flames

hounded her to death on husband’s pyre

Declared “chaste” by self-styled upholders of religion.

The embers of her flowering desires

consigned to flames along with body

quenched by a sprinkle of holy water.

Ghat : area near river

Amita Ray: Amita Ray is former associate professor in English of a college and is based in Kolkata, An academic of varied interests she is a Translator, Short Story writer and Poet. She has two volumes in Translations of noted Bengali authors to her credit. She is presently a translator in several ongoing projects. Her latest publication is a collection of short stories titled TRAIL OF LOVE AND LONGINGS. She has a passion for writing poems and has been widely published in various anthologies and journals. She is also an Executive Committee member of Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library, Kolkata.

There will always be an island

the island of readers

unbiased

who come to my writing as nymphs and dryads

to the cool of a forest

and the shade of a waterfall

to enjoy the words;

sound

cascading like water

picking and eating them

like berries

that stain their lips red

with their juice

and because of these and the naiads

who quench their thirst at my poems; fountains

because of the refreshment they give

I breathe

I live

Ampat Koshy: Dr. Koshy A.V. was till recently working as an Assistant Professor in the English Department of Jazan University, Saudi Arabia. He has many books, degrees, diplomas, certificates, prizes, and awards to his credit and also, besides teaching, is an editor, anthology maker, poet, critic and writer of fiction. He runs an autism NPO with his wife, Anna Gabriel. Two of his co-authored books published in 2020 were Amazon best-sellers in India and USA, namely, Wine-kissed Poems with Jagari Mukherjee and Vodka by the Volga with Santosh Bakaya. His latest achievements are winning a certificate in Italy for his poetry, and editing an anthology as well as working as Visiting Professor in FET, Jain University, Bangalore teaching Communicative English for Academic Purposes.

WILDFLOWERS BY THE SIDE OF THE BARREN ROAD—A VILLANELLE

Wildflowers by the side of the barren road

In a lonesome forgotten place of their own

Sky their roof and earth their one abode.

Wilting beside the road in pain they live

Eyes glisten in bags of skin and bones

Wildflowers by the side of the barren road.

Waving in clusters the dusty breeze they breathe

Mad and merry they live in twilight zone

Sky their roof and earth their one abode.

Reds and greens and blues their motley dress

In harlequin posies they gaily stand alone

Wildflowers by the side of the barren road.

Their fecund mother of many pregnancies

Gathers her clan of so many Jacks and Joans

Sky their roof and earth their one abode

For bread they lack for water must they whine

Yet they cannot melt our hearts of stone

Wildflowers by the side of the barren road

Sky their roof and earth their one abode.

Amrita Valan: She is a writer from India, a mother of two boys. She loves writing poems, essays, and short stories on her life, and the vagaries and eccentricities of lives around her. Her debut collection of poems, "Arrivederci", was published on Amazon in May 2021. Her collection of short stories In Between Pauses is upcoming. Her works appear in diverse anthologies, and online journals. She is the recipient of a jury award for the Friendswood Library 2021 Ekphrastic poetry reading and contest. Her poems on domestic violence have been selected by DEFY Domestic Abuse Beloit, a program of Family Services of S. WI & N. IL, Inc.

ALIEN

In one corner of the world

I spread my wings, happy like a butterfly.

The president smiles from the currency

notes all adore back home

My white collar has turned yellow

for targets.

Butterflies, orange and white,

also spread their wings in the thick,

thorny bush where tiny flowers

offered irresistible nectar to children,

who knew the flowers like close relatives,

uncle and aunts, providing mangoes,

mired in milk and bread in hot

summer evenings

Uncle Sam watches me invisible when

I bite my bread with cucumber and sausage

I bought with smiling currency notes

The thorny bush is also smiling from

within a white collar migrant

in an alien dreamland.

Aneek Chatterjee: He is a poet and academic from Kolkata, India. He has been published in reputed literary magazines and poetry anthologies across the globe. He has authored 14 books, including three poetry collections and a novel. His third poetry collection is titled ‘Of Ashes and Persiflage’. His earlier poetry collections titled ‘Seaside Myopia’ and ‘Unborn Poems and Yellow Prison’ received rave reviews. He has been teaching in leading Indian and foreign universities. He was a Fulbright Visiting faculty at the University of Virginia, USA, and recipient of the prestigious ICCR Chair, given by the Government of India, to teach abroad. His poetry has been archived at Yale University.

FIND ME

In the middle of the darkest night

When hope seems lost.

In the stormy skies, in the pouring rain

As the thunder reverberates and lightning streaks

Through mud and marsh rescue me.

At the stroke of dawn as

The cacophony of birds bestows their symphony

When the sun rises peaks through your window

Embrace me with your love.

In the blooming fields of daffodils and poppies

as a sweet aroma of rosebuds

sprinkled at my feet washes the tears away

As the dewdrops kiss the evening skies

Dance with me to the sounds of nature's gifts.

In our favorite melodies

As the constellation of stars are ablaze

In the silence of your mind

In the crevices of your soul

Peep into your heart

Forever you will find me

A bond that can never sever

I am you.

Angela Chetty: I am a poet residing in Durban, South Africa. I am passionate about poetry and strongly believe that words can change the heart and heal the soul. I have contributed to various anthologies, numerous journals, and on-line platforms. I have also published a poetry anthology. I have received several accolades including being honoured as a contemporary poet with the most heartfelt poems in 2019 and had two poems featured in the Top 100 poems for 2019.

SOMETHING IN YOU

There is something in you

That draws me towards you—

May be the sidelong glances that

Pierce through my heart like

Arrows of flowers—not at all damaging;

Or maybe the swinging gait—

That reminds me of the creeper

Climbing the wall of the balcony

Where I enjoy the cool breeze

Sipping my morning coffee;

Or maybe the bunch of dark hair—

That cascades down your back,

Cloyed with fragrance of morning

Flowers and I feel like sleeping to

Dream about you and me suddenly

Falling in love with each other;

And that smile,

Like slow unfurling of petals

As the sun spills silver dusts on them,

And the clouds watching awestruck;

There is something in you that

I forget to forget and get drawn to you.

Anil Kumar Panda: He was born in a small town, Brajrajnagar, in Odisha,India. At present, he is working in a coal mine sector and writes poems and stories when he finds time. He has already published two books of poems: Fragrance of Love; and Melody of Love. He is working on his third book now. His poems have been published in many national and international anthologies. He loves to write romantic poems. He likes travelling and meeting people of different nationalities and cultures. He takes inspiration from the simple life of villagers and Nature's beauty still thriving in rural areas. He enjoys walking by streams and into forests to be with the flora and fauna.

SAQI OF THE SKIES

Just because she is nearest to him, does she think she is his chosen bride?

Look at her twinkling as if the sky has showered her with the choicest diamonds it could find!

She is a-quiver with the delusion that she would soon be embosomed by his glow that keeps the world enraptured at night.

And then there are others, like pallid pinpricks of light, sneaking in through a dreary old curtain

Inching closer to the pearly chandelier for his attention

Don't they realise that all it would take is for a puff of cloud to snuff them out of their misplaced intention?

He lounges casually, unconcerned by the sighing stars,

Nonchalantly luxuriating on his velveteen bean bag as if only to break their fanciful hearts,

While I flicker in mirth and yet burn with this inexplicable longing from afar.

I know he will not turn to glance my way, I do nothing to draw his gaze.

Patiently, I wait for the machinations of the universe to weave my destiny into my pathways

Leading me to him in time, when the world will rejoice at our coupled sighting and come together in celebratory embrace.

Anju Kishore: A poet, editor and formerly a professional accountant, Anju Kishore calls herself a 'Window Wanderer'. Her poems, some of them prize-winning, have been featured in numerous journals and anthologies. Her book of poems inspired by the civil war in Syria, '…and I Stop to Listen' earned her a glowing review in Kendriya Sahitya Akademi's English journal, Indian Literature. She has been part of the editorial teams of seven anthologies so far with India Poetry Circle, Kavya-Adisakrit Publishing, Soul Scribers Society, Salem, and World Literature India.

IMPASSE

Yesterdays,

out of control.

Tomorrows,

gone before they show.

In a hurry to get nowhere.

Running to stand still.

I was once young,

a long time ago.

I sought redemption

in written words,

baring my soul to all.

There are no chapters,

only words

upon pages of sand

written in an ancient tongue.

Questions fall past my lips

into an empty world.

The perfect word eludes me

as it plays upon my thoughts.

Taunting, deceiving, amusing,

it vanishes at once.

published by Inner Circle Writer's Magazine (UK). November 2019

Ann Christine Tabaka: I am a poet and writer residing in Delaware, USA. I am a retired organic chemist and a retired personal trainer. I have 14 poetry books. I was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry. I was the winner of Spillwords Press 2020 Publication of the Year (Poetic). My bio is featured in the "Who's Who of Emerging Writers 2020 and 2021," published by Sweetycat Press.

(a complete list of publications is available upon request)

THE NOTHING POET

(Funny)

Abused zesty quarterbacks

Shaky and thirsty, happy yet pink and purple

Impeached beefy pimples not so simple

Scared screamed heavily creamed, hollered so easily

Kow-towed excessively, unveiled pads so loyally

Mahogany but freak n frailed

Anxious but silently derailed, rotates without sound

Politely weaved and waved, abetted cookies saved

Tattled excitedly, happily implicated now and then

Amused windy mid-wives knifed pizzas over oven

Truthfulness missing,

happiness comes but

Endearing to controversies

Nasty big name, often mis-spelled

Thinking overtime, hinging on small crime

Important to whom, none knows

Noble things don't expectedly

Gawked scarcely

Paled highly rightfully delightfully

Overconfidence often uncooked

Earnest sometimes somewhere

Taunted everyone everywhere.

Ashish Kumar Pathak: He is a primary education teacher posted in Munger district of Bihar. He has got a letter of appreciation from the President of India for his poem. His works have been featured in various Indian anthologies. .His forte is reflexive sociopolitical poems.

RENDEZVOUS IN THE RAIN…

In a moment of joy and sorrow

A spider has come to stay with us, weaving cobwebs

In the core of our hearts

Warm lips of winter

The wind playing with the candle

You are a fantasy

A forgotten melody

Breathless song

Spider is weaving cobwebs

Trapped our hearts

Left skeleton behind

Tonight, twinkling stars and half moon

Invite us for a never before rendezvous

As strangers, as soul mates

No looking behind

Our shadows walked carefully apart…

Asoke Kumar Mitra: He studied at Hindu school and St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, and is a retired journalist and was editor of 'Calcutta Canvas' and 'Indus Chronicle'. He is a bilingual poet. He has contributed to various anthologies published in India and abroad. His poems are translated into various languages. 'Savage Wind' is his first poetry book, a bilingual edition, translated into Spanish by Mexican poet Josep Juarez. 'Song Of Pebbles' is his second bilingual poetry book, which is translated into French. Poetry, photography, paintings are his passions.

IT IS A TIME

It is a time to

rediscover water

when our juices run dry.

It is a time when

milk is undelivered or sour or sickening.

A time when

our eyes grow dim,

And when, by force,

we learn to thread

a needle that has grown

a smaller eye that pricks our hands like a cat claw, blooded.

It is a time when,

unused to stitching for ourselves,

our eyes sting and

with a redness vein, and

with a raw salt sting

It is a time when

our unpractised hands tremble...

Barry Pittard: I am a poet, lyricist and short story writer, living in the Hinterland of South East Queensland, Australia. I am a retired (refreshed!) teacher, and have also worked as an NGO among the socially marginalised. I have broadcast on social just and world music themes on community radio. In the theatre, I worked as an actor, director and writer. Presently, I am doing a personal dance sadhana, extensively using the superb music of Uma Mohan.

LOVE LIVES HERE

We are inseparable

Our hearts intertwined

The love we share

Just blows the mind

We've faced storms

The barrel of a gun

But we are still standing

Two in one

True to our vows

Sacred and eternal

A love unmatched

Still burning like a furnace

Love lives here

Carved into our home

We are a team

Cannot face this world alone

We share in each other's joys

Each heartache and tear

Always prepared to protect each other

Through challenges and fear

Love lives here

See how it grows

More stronger than a nail

More beautiful than a rose

Bevan Boggenpoel: His debut anthology published in December 2016 was well received by the public and he sold 200 copies locally. He is also an author at a South African website known as Litnet (Literature Network in South Africa). His poetry is written in a South African context that covers different issues in daily life. In his writings, he strives to tell a story or teach a lesson that will inspire and motivate. He is currently a teacher at Bethelsdorp Road Primary in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth.

KILLING OF A PIG BY HANDSOME HANDS

No, it was not for the pork

But thousands of sane and smart people

Were running after it

In the park

The beautiful park

Where beauty played

In abundance

Nature gracious with

Colorful flowers and singing birds

Shall we call it sanity

When these handsome people were hunting

For pleasure

Thousands of handsome hands

Squeezing

The neck of a poor pig

Its tongue hanging and eyes protruding?

The poor pig

Running

For life

For life

Running

The poor

Pig

Bharati Nayak: She is a bilingual poet, critic and translator from Bhubaneswar, India. Her poems have been published in national and international books, e-books and magazines. She has so far published eight poetry books: Padma Pada (Odia); Words Are Such Perfect Traitors (English); A Day For Myself (English); In The Realms of Love and Divinity (co-written with the German Poet Dr.Antony Theodore); Radical Rhythm in four volumes (co-written with members of Cosmic Crew). She has been conferred the Sahitya Lahari award by International Cosmos Society, India, in 2018 and Star Ambassador of World Poetry And Art Philosophique Poetica International Award in Literature by the World Poetry Conference in Bhatinda, Punjab, India in 2019.

MARCH 9, 2009: FIFTY YEARS ON

dedicated to my wife Ghisela, born on the same day that the Barbie doll was released

Even though she's fifty now,

I'm blamin' Barbie anyhow.

She still titillates; she's the reason I seek

long legs, mountain peaks

of breasts, and high cheeks.

I have seen her parts piled in mounds

in backyards, yet male eyes still

follow every outlandish curve

of her still but smooth body:

Bright blonde hair flowing

over supernaturally

proportioned hips and smooth

but crooked arms.

Besides, how can men be faithful to one

when there are so many of her?

Doctors, lawyers, surfers, executives,

models, and now even inked: like

the ultimate biker chick.

Bill Cushing: He resides with his wife and their son in Glendale, California. Re-entering college after serving in the Navy and working on oil tankers, classmates at the University of Central Florida called him the "blue collar writer." Recently retired after years teaching college English in the Los Angeles area, Bill's writings have appeared in newspapers, magazines, journals, and anthologies, both in print and online. Besides writing, Bill facilitates a writing workshop for 9 Bridges, a non-profit writing coalition, and for Armed Services Art Partnership. He has three books of poetry available: A Former Life; Music Speaks; and This Just In.

AN OLD BOOK

Rests on the shelf, an old book

Telling an untold story.

Story of eternal ties.

Not in the printed letters

Is the story inscribed,

But between yellowed pages

A heart-touching tale described.

In the dried up petals,

Nestled between the book leaves.

In the fingerprints,

on the page corners.

In the lingering perfume

soaked in the parchment paper.

In the faded lip marks

Smiling bold in the last page.

In favorite initials

Scribbled with a deep desire.

In the stains of hidden tears

left on the fading pages.

In blurred and crumpled picture

hidden there since ages.

In twisted threads of fiber,

trapped in the withered bindings

Each remnant exquisitely unfolds

the glory of an untold story.

Bilquis Fatima: She loves Nature and has been speaking for social issues, expressing her feelings in the form of short articles and speeches right from her college days. She is a regular contributor to GloMag and On Fire Cultural Movement. Her poems have also been published in various other national and international publications. Poetic Aroma is her first published book of poems.

WHILE PASSING OVER MAHANADI AT THE NARAJ BRIDGE

In its full swing, the river Mahanadi flows,

A carpet of blue waters,

Joyfully rippling into the infinity

Over the Naraj bridge, on a train

My window opens out, to a picturesque expanse

Let me come down,

On to the crest of the dancing waves,

To glide along, rising and falling

Like the fowls sway

Let me catch a patch of the blue sky

On my chest, imaged,

And clouds of countless colors

To touch the horizons beyond my eyes reach

The naughty wind nudges me

Singing a love song, nostalgic,

Sweeps over the watery stretch

Down the memories

Bishnu Charan Parida: Bishnu Charan Parida from Jajpur Road, Odisha, India, is a bilingual poet. His poems have been published in many anthologies and magazines of national and international repute. He has been honoured on many literary platforms and won awards from literary organisations.

ANY LOVE THAT SHINES

how can you condemn

the love they share

because they’re not like you

what right have you

to say what’s pure

any love that shines

if it steals the darkness

from the day

you say it can’t be right

in prejudiced eyes

it’s against the natural law

what right have you

to say they're wrong

it's not just your world

to follow tired rules

all should be free to love

what right have you

to condemn what's true

any love that shines

if it steals the darkness

from the day

Brian Mackenzie: I was born in Inverness in 1949 and lived there until 1969. Since then, I have lived in Lond and Saudi Arabia. I have worked for most of my life in the Airline Industry, which enabled me to travel the world quite easily and cheaply. I am now retired and have lived in Spain for the last ten years. I only started writing since I retired in 2009, and it is only in the last few years that I started writing songs and poems, and I suppose have become quite prolific. I have self-published six books and one book has been by a publisher; the second one is soon to be released.

IN THE SHOES OF AN AUTISTIC PERSON

This poem is to spread awareness on autism and dedicated to all who do services in this regard.

When earthquakes erupt within me

it is I who feel

the vibrations

and

the reverberations—

do not leave me as an island

and rate me on a scale of

one to ten

for it has an impact

of zero Richter Scale

that causes no harm to you.

When a fight brews up

on the road

and you hear ugly words spilled

I see the orange butterfly

and the pink hibiscus blooming—

let me do what I want

when I want—

let me be fascinated by

all things natural.

Please understand that

I am a unique country

I have my own constitution

and all I need is to be

accepted and given due recognition.

Brindha Vinodh: She is a postgraduate in Econometrics but a writer within. She has contributed to several anthologies and has been a featured poet in ‘year of the poet’ by InnerChildPress International’, USA, and her roseate sonnet selected as one of the best poems of 2020 by the same team.

UNENDURABLE TIMES

(1)

Under the star-spangled sky

Shimmering rivulet in moonlight

Gushes out gurgling with froths

Tirelessly it keeps running day and night

Staring at I sit wondering if it stops!

(2)

Its soothing melodies take me back

To a love song once soul-mate sang

That came pouring out deep passions

And promises galore of eternal journey

I sit wondering if it still sparks to life!

(3)

Dormant heart it awoke to dreams

As the flowers open in the sunbeams

Lying deep cold love-seeds sprang up

Aching for blooming in vibrant colors

I sit wondering why they could not!

(4)

After long sitting on the bank I see

Water still runs with thick froths

Shimmering in the moon-lit night

A heavy silence pierces my longing heart

I sit wondering if it was a nightmare!

(5)

The sun is about to take its last bow

And the vast horizon a riot of color

A cool breeze ripples the blue water

I long to hear the song before my eyes close

I sit wondering if my soul-mate could!

B S Tyagi: He is from India and is a bilingual poet and novelist. He has several books, both fiction and non-fiction, to his credit. His poems and short stories have been included in a number of anthologies. His writes-ups, short stories, and poems appear in national and international literary magazines. Besides, he has translated seven poetry books from Hindi to English. Inner joy of creativity is the best prize to him.

TABULA RASA

I saw the ethos of a
generation destroyed—
mourning the philosophers
In their artful vision.

The sense datum clouds
with cries of the
nymphs welcoming
new world dawns.

Mentality is, in its way forming,
a sign of hopeful intelligence.
Knavish roadblocks obstruct
triumphant returns to Arcadia.

Asterism fills my sight
As the false memories

Of a partial Utopia

Flood my soul.

Carl Scharwath: Carl Scharwath has appeared globally with 170+ journals selecting his poetry, prose, interviews, essays, plays or art. Two poetry books ***Journey to Become Forgotte****n* and ***Abandoned*** have been published. His new book ***The Playground of Destiny*** features prose, poems, and photography. His first photography book was published by Praxis in Africa. Carl is the art editor for Minute Magazine (USA), a competitive runner, and a 2nd degree black-belt in Taekwondo. Carl was recently nominated for Best of the Net 2021 award and was a finalist for the Mary Cassatt award for photography.

NO,

have not forgotten you,

cannot, will never ever

so much so

remember your shadow too,

that slant deep look

you left every evening

leaving fragrance

in air

in me

till we had to part.

Chandramohan Naidu: He is a retired bank employee, now a freelance writer and photographer based in Chennai, part of the poetry circle which meets first Wednesday of every month. He writes poems to be subsequently brought out into a collection.

ROXANA AND ALEXANDER THE GREAT

He was great. He drove to admiration
All those who would despise him if they could,
Among the gods he found proper station
Born to conquer the world I understood.
He loved what I represented, the whole East
As his prize, I loved him as his subject
To begin with, awkward our marriage feast
The other Greeks disliked me, would reject
A princess of Sogdia, did I care?
He did not care, I came to love truly
That marvel of the earth, so mad so wild
One night we impressed each other duly
In that great brute I found a gentle child.
After a while his men made him go back
From India's edge, they missed Europe's charms,
And from his heart I felt a thunder crack
That he would not take all by feat of arms.

Life could not hold him, I’m a widow queen

Our son yet to be born, his men scheme-full

Mean dull men’s squabbles. He was never mean…

Nor was he ever, whatever else, dull.

Christopher Villiers: I am a poet residing in Braunton, England. I work as a writer. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published three volumes of poetry.

WINTER WANDERING

upon nameless path

beneath endless unseen sky

breathes the dark morning

dawn’s light brings no warmth

brittle grass under my boots

ice on the stream banks

gray and brown, the woods

last leaves, not wanting to fall

north wind waves goodbye

blanket of low clouds

sleepy earth whispers softly

take the long way home

edge of the treeline

see the lonely pebble slide

on the frozen pond

winter's light fading

across forgotten backroads

she's waiting for me

Dale Adams: Dale Adams lives in Bethany Oklahoma with his wife, one dog, and an unknown number of guitars. He enjoys reading history and science, as well as poetry and music. He has been writing poetry and composing songs since 2011. Dale has established SoundCloud and YouTube Channels, and has converted poems into songs for many other poets. When one of his own poems becomes a song, he records it in his home studio and posts to Soundcloud, YouTube, and Facebook. Some of Dale's publications are Warriors With Wings Anthology, and Fallen Angel Anthology.

https://soundcloud.com/dale-adams-272904153

https://www.youtube.com/user/DrBuggs13

KYLIAN AND THE KITTEN

The kitten captivates Kylian

And Kylian and the kitten

They captivate us.

The kitten is looking for a Güito

Of an olive Green, while Kylian

Seems to be calling it

With a "bis bis bis"

Still very fine.

What's it called this cute kitty?

The owner of it thinks that he has lost it

And he has found it

A name like Olinos.

Name of that Count that sang

At the sea's shore:

—Look, boy, how well sings

The little mermaid boy of the Sea.

Listen, Rita

Attend, Daniel

Attend, Isabel

What Kylian thinks if he would catch this kitty

That it moaned for him.

Daniel de Culla: I am a poet and writer residing in Burgos, Spain. I am retired. I have also published more than seventy poetry anthologies.

PREDATORS

Inject the primeval predators with intelligence.

Add duplicity, cunning and craftiness,

Shake well.

Let the predators loose on the hapless.

Bullied, beaten and broken,

The frightened people are cowed and crushed.

Manacled minds, frightened to think, afraid to feel,

Incarcerated, castrated, barred, colonised and conquered,

Shadowed lives shrunken and stultified,

Stuck in the fiery quicksand of a savage bygone era,

The future is chained to the primitive past.

Herded into feral mobs, the recidivist cadavers are comfortable in the past,

Nazi spectres poison the present.

Deena Padayachee: Dr Deena Padayachee is a medical doctor, a graduate of Natal University in South Africa. He is the recipient of the Olive Schreiner and Nadine Gordimer prizes for prose. His poems have been published in India (GloMag), the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia and South Africa. His book of liberation poems, ‘A Voice from the Cauldron' was published during Apartheid in 1986. Some of his oeuvres have been translated into Xhosa, Zulu, Tamil, Hindi and Italian. He has been invited to speak at literary conferences at universities in Germany, India, Denmark, Mauritius, the USA and South Africa.

Half of the spring water

That she carried in her bowl of wishes

Last night,

Was spilled on the way

The rest was broken

Into tiny droplets

That rained through her cheeks

All night long.

I waited all night at the feet of the mountain

Under a sky full of stars

Amidst a constant chorus of crickets.

The sound of her footsteps

Did arrive at the crack of dawn

But without the spring water

Nothing could be done.

So, she had to climb up

Climb up the mountain again.

And I started waiting for the second time.

And then again for many times.

She had to try

And I had to wait.

Dipankar Sarkar: I am only a part-time poet residing in Kolkata, India. I work as the CEO of Mongia Green Foundation. Poetry is the only soulmate I have. I find solace in poetry when my heart bleeds. Poetry comes to me completely unannounced, without a notice. I wake up sometimes, out of an altered reality or out of a daydream, and voila, words just start flowing out of nowhere and completely inundate me, forcing me to live an experience of writing.

LET LOVE LIVE

The fragility of humanity surely should result in an encompassing loving

fraternity where all are welcomed tolerated and supported no matter your

religion caste beliefs or even your sexual orientation in this ever expanding

global nation. *Let love live* daily in your heart mind and soul even when dark

forces attempt to fracture and conspire to sow division confusion mayhem

negativity and toxicity – Be mindful of how your words can cut puncture and

rupture your inner calm peace and tranquillity. *Let love live* continuously in

your consciousness mindfulness even steering your moral compass ensuring

long lasting happiness. Open your mind to new experiences even though you

might fear to maybe enjoy a diverse rush of unexpected joy. Be bold let go and

trust your senses – You might even be surprised by what awaits you if you

would only allow yourself to breathe then soar on the winds of opportunity

feeling rejuvenated cleansed and inspired. *Let love live* in your daily contact

with humanity opening your eyes to surprising new revelations and unexpected

sensations. Explore new frontiers even unknown nations to learn from maybe

even adapt your unintended brainwashing thinking caused by forced influences

whilst shedding negativity of a changing world where values that matter are

shredded like fodder because without love for one another we will surely

experience unknown atrocities unless we allow ourselves to *let love live*.

Let love live long live love life is love languish in love everlasting...

Don Beukes: He is a South African, British and EU poet and writer. He is a poetry chapbook reviewer at The Poetry Café. He has written ekphrastic poetry collaborating with artists internationally. He is the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles'; 'Icarus Rising-Volume 1', an ekphrastic collection; and 'Sic Transit Gloria Mundi'. He was a teacher in both South Africa and the UK. His poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections and translated into various languages. He was nominated for the 'Best of the Net' as well as the Pushcart Poetry Prize (USA). He was published in his first SA Anthology 'In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection' in 2018 (eBook) and his second, 'Cape Sounds' in 2019.

OPIATES OF THE MASSES

Crucifiction, Failosophy, Hisstory:

Tomorrow is a myth. And so is yesterday. Now is all.

Physicks, Asstrology, Isometricks:

Yourself, as you are today, is your only guide.

Medisin, Accupunkture, Sighchiatry:

There is no cure for reality.

Litterature, Statuwary, Musick:

Art is a grand mirage—and it takes great pride in being so.

Soshellism, Dicktatorship, Demockracy:

All government systems are synonyms for slavery.

Kingdumbs, Milittearism, Onerousship:

Allegiance to others is suicide.

Noosepapers, Liebraries, Educashun:

“Knowledge” so-called is mere pretense.

Relashunships, Guarantease, Freedumb:

Promises are illusions. But illusions may also be promises.

Ambishun, Suckcess, Sellebrity:

Self-promotion is the greatest deception of all.

Syphillisation:

Truth is what you trust

Duane Vorhees: He grew up in rural Ohio, fell in love, went to school, fell in love, stuck his toe on bits of four continents, fell in love, taught and learned various subjects, fell in love, grew chronologically and physically. Fell in love, fell in love, fell in love. ‘Love's Autobiography’ is the first part of a longer meditation, ‘The Many Loves of Duane Vorhees’. It is based on a lifetime of observation, imagination, introspection, experience, and fantasy.

SHE WHISPERS SWEETLY

Whispers she sweetly, like a fairy

Of a heavenly land and doesn't tarry

Plucks she a voice that is not heard

So sweet and soft, yet subtle and blurred

Joy of joys, in her words lies

What an archaic! Rare in the skies

So dread a forlorn shall get a hope

So pure a love, her words can grope

Drizzles her tone upon inner heart

Bathed in love, her tone doesn’t part

Life and living can never be spectral

God has crowned her such a soul

Sometimes fairy and angel at other

Meet her heart with rainbow colour

Her love like sparkling wave as glee

Falls as life’s dewdrop, never to flee

So movingly smiles she, lips so glow

Emotion moist looks here ever blow

Earth is earth and heaven is heaven

For her both are equally to leaven

Dusmanta Choudhury: He is a poet residing in Jeypore, in the district of Koraput, Odisha, India. He a Lecturer in English in Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Jr. College, Lamtaput in Koraput district in the Department of Higher Education Government of Odisha. He has contributed to various anthologies. He has recently got the Honour of Pentasi B World Featured Poet 2020. He is also a member of the Pentasi B world Friendship Poetry, The Tunisian Asian Poetry, The Poetry Society, The World Nation's Writers Union, The Love, The Global Literary Society, The Namaste ink an Author's Manifesto, etc. He has also published many Odia and English poems.

WITHOUT DIVISION

On a way to freedom

there’s no place for evil.

It’s unavailing.

Target can be reached

by bluffing,

that we don’t notice enemies.

Seeing but not responding,

intent comes to fruition.

Harmony

needs understanding,

but all

have laws and duties

Freedom for the world

Regard

with no segregation—for everyone.

Eliza Segiet: She received the Global Literature Guardian Award – from Motivational Strips, World Nations Writers Union and Union Hispanomundial De Escritores (UHE) 2018. She was nominated for the Pushcart Prize 2019. She won the Laureate Naji Naaman Literary Prize 2020; the Laureate International Award Paragon of Hope (2020); the Laureate World Award 2020 Cesar Vallejo for Literary Excellence; the Laureate of the Special Jury Sahitto International Award 2021; the Laureate World Award Premiul Fănuș Neagu 2021; and she is a finalist for the Golden Aster Book World Literary Prize 2020. It is in the last stage of an international competition Mili Dueli 2020.

AN OLD CONNECTICUT HOME

He presents not to know

everything nor does he see it.

A court composer tossed, invaded.

The processes

surround the skeletons.

In his preceding existence,

they delivered him

to this extraordinary sight.

Watching the trees carry

color from year to death.

It will be here

he takes his last breath.

Ferris E Jones: He is an award-winning, internationally published poet and screenwriter living in Puyallup Washington. His work has appeared in both print and online magazines. He is the recipient of two grants from the Nevada Arts Council and the Editor/Publisher of Nevada Poets 2009. Ferris has twice received honorable mention awards from Writers Digest annual screenwriting contest. He is also the Author/Editor of seven collections of poetry. You

can learn more about Ferris E. Jones by visiting www.inquisitionpoetry.com where each month he features the work of other poets. The goal of this site is to spread the word of poetry throughout the world.

I NEED YOU

That broad protective shoulder you said was mine,

When I was tired with my struggle

Those strong arms, which you said would always welcome me back

That space in your heart which you said would always be filled with me

Those eyes which you said would always take my tears away

Those hands which you said would always hold mine tight

Those ears which you said would always be attuned to the sounds of my joys and sorrows

That voice which you said would always speak to me in times of loneliness

All those things which you said belonged to me

All those dreams which you said were mine,

Where are they?

I need them now

I need them to fill the void in my life

I need them to rest awhile

I need them to pass the endless nights

Fiza Abubacker: After a highly successful and fruitful career in the corporate world, I switched over to teaching because of my passion for working with children. My expertise as a trainer has added great value to my teaching career. I have been teaching English for the past eleven years. I am the co-ordinator for Languages in the Senior School. They include Spanish, French and German too. I am also the teacher co-ordinator of the school E-magazine Snap Shot. I firmly believe that learning can best be achieved through a lot of fun.

16TH AUGUST

freedom wakes up with a raging headache

nothing of concern, just the annual hangover

he had started right after the last stroke of midnight of the 14th

a tryst with destiny...

at the early morning flag hoisting, he screamed Vande Mataram and Jai Hind upto a point where he could shout no more

anyway no one could hear him

and no one would pay heed even if they heard him

he had some more

at every freedom breakfast, freedom lunch, freedom high tea and freedom dinner

after all he is freedom

what a day it was!

he went to sleep

feeling proud

only freedom could get drunk on a dry day

Gauri Dixit: When not busy working in her office, she is busy being a traveller, climbing mountains, walking on untrodden paths, capturing the voice of a solitary flower blossoming from a rock or the bird sitting on a hanging branch, sometimes the setting sun or the sea in her camera as well as in the words she weaves. Her poems speak in a voice which is unique, cold and direct. That she has been a part of many anthologies as well as a Reuel Prize awardee and had commendable mention at Destiny's Poet is incidental. In her first book, ‘In My Skin, I Find Freedom’, there are poems on varied subjects, yet there is a common thread of the skeptical questioning mind of a free woman.

MIRAGE

Walking along my shadow on a lonely road

In a hushed afternoon draped in eerie silence

A bittersweet commotion rising in my inner core

Penetrating deep to know

What is destined at the journey's end

Blazing Sun shining on my head

I feel lost in a dreary desert

But my feet keep on questing for something unknown

Even in the midst of that desolate silence

No one is there to hear me

Still my footsteps want to reverberate someone

Approaching towards me

My ears ring as if I hear someone calling my name

But then my illusion breaks down

Suddenly the mirage disappears

And then I realise

I am destined to walk on my own track alone

Though I don’t know where the road leads...

Gayatree G. Lahon: Gayatree is a teacher by profession and a poet by passion. She is a post-graduate in English literature from Gauhati University .Being a true aesthete, she finds beauty in every object of life and Nature and her ink pours those elements in a subtle way. For her, poetry is a passion where she finds peace and solace amidst the complexities of life. Her poems have been published in various national and international anthologies, magazines, newspapers and web journals.

THE DESCENT

The halo brightens the sky

I glance at the world,

My world, longingly

A stream of faces,

Vulnerably sweet,

Flows by,

How I love them all!

A cacophony of departing birds

Crowded around trees, circling, confused,

Ready to disperse,

The earth, the breeze, the scattering clouds,

Flowers…the sea…cows…dogs…

Why even a blade of grass

Lift my spirits

But I sink, I have little choice

The strings pull me down

Leaving all in darkness

Except for the moon, shining.

Geeta Varma: She is a poet and a writer based in Chennai. She has been a teacher and a Freelance journalist for some time. She has recently published two books of poems. ‘To My Violin’ is a collection of her poems. ‘Twilight Ours’ is a collection of both her poems and her husband, Shreekumar Varma's poems.

AND WHILE YOU HOLD MY HAND

Don’t squeeze the life out of my scarred heart

Making a sculpture out of stone and weaving out of me damask art

Don’t tell me that moon drops bleed from my eyes for all the tears you caused

And say I’m a harp string broken as I sang and suddenly paused

Don’t dab so much green in our conversations hoping I’ll become a forest of pines,

Evergreens have gnarled trunks and wrinkles even as the sun gently shines

Don’t call me your dove and cage me on the ledge when I’m calmer

Clipping my wings, watching me crippled with your sledgehammer

Don’t adorn me with ornamental words when all I want is your love

Please don’t make a metaphor out of me burning down like a comet from above

Geethanjali Dilip: Looking for music all around, Geethanjali believes she too is a song offering. Poetry has become a huge part of her life since ten years, fetching her some prestigious awards and more than that an insight into the world of poetry. Her solo anthologies ‘Geethatmaa—The Soul Song’ and ‘Hansa Geetham—Song Of The Celestial Song’ have earned some good reviews. She believes that poetry connects the world, while she curates the Yercaud Poetry Festival now four years.

REMEMBER THE TIME?

Remember the time

I shared with you my fascination

for ancient civilizations

Those broken mud pots

Their funny weapons

Their quaint paintings

Their lifestyle so different

from ours

But the sky was the same then too

The Moon shone just as bright

There was then too a Bloody Moon

The Venus still spoke Love

And Saturn buzzed with so many rings!

Remember the time

I said I wish we were in a time machine

Or moved far away and flowed with the river

Moved back in time or forward

Now just part of a landscape

encompassing a Universe?

Glory Sasikala: She is a writer, publisher, and poet currently residing in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. She is the Editor and Publisher of GloMag, an international poetry and prose magazine. Her poetry books, novels, and short stories are available in various online bookstores as well as on her blogs. She is on the brink of publishing a very interesting collection of anecdotes and short stories inspired by her rather colourful and chequered life, titled, ‘A Piece Of Pink And Other Stories’.

LEAVING ME BEHIND

if you read my palm

there are many byways and highways

narrow lanes and cobblestone allies

it’s like a map giving directions

to many destinations

and you leave your footprints

through all the towns

and villages, you pass

as a reminder that you were there once

and on one of your sojourns

you touched me with your hands

and left your fingerprints on my heart

WITH MY SONG

If I stood beneath you window

when evening shadows fall

and the moonlight stole a glow

from the embers of the setting sun

if I stole the words from a poem

turned them into lyrics

for a wondrous love song

with a smooth velvet rhapsody

and serenaded you

with every musical note

will you be enchanted

would it rapture your heart

would you share the bliss with me

would you embrace

the fragrance of the night

and dance with me to the musical harmony of my poem

dedicated in the song

I conceived for you

Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny: He is an Indian born, and brought up in South Africa. He has been fascinated by, and writing poetry since his early boyhood. He has performed his poetry at various forums, including the Poetry Africa Festival, the Mauritian Writers' Association, and Glorioustimes, India. He is the Convenor of the Live Poets Society, Durban, South Africa.

TIMELESS DEEP

Here I am unknown, unloved but undeterred

in darkness, a life has come apart,

my texts and sub-texts are incomplete like translucent teardrops

every night negotiates to create a fine balance between

grief and condolence.

Far from the ones I love and care, silence drops

on the open ink-stand, torments and blurs

the unswitched lamp, the orange glass shade,

my exiled home is always like a half-empty page and

unfinished sentence.

My life isn’t fine-combed but there is no tragedy,

I write my home stories in unrhymed lines,

draw the familial memory of blank verse,

but the strong wind always reciprocates in laugh.

I will not bend, I will never stop,

my words hold breath in timeless deep.

Gopal Lahiri: He is a Kolkata-based bilingual poet, critic, editor and translator with 26 books published mostly (17) in English and a few (9) in Bengali, including six jointly edited books. His poetry is also published across various anthologies as well as in journals of India and abroad. His poems are translated in 16 languages. He is the recipient of the Poet of the Year Award in Destiny Poets, UK, 2016; Setu Excellence Award, 2020, Pittsburgh, US; and Lifetime Achievement Award, Indology, West Bengal, 2020.

STONE

Translated by Nirendra Nath Thakuria

By beating and pounding

stones can be made only smaller

but never made any bigger

Stones normally have no home

They lie around anywhere

Run over by vehicles

stones don’t get flattened

Pedestrians tread on them

yet no skin is broken

Pounded by the hammer

smaller and smaller they turn

Even then we call them

hard cruel and so on

Stones are eternal

as they can turn smaller instantly

for the good of others

(The beneficent do not die)

No lasting aesthetic is attainable without sculpture

In every age stone sculpture proves best

Still we find it hard to easily believe that

the eternal stone is all in all the glory of humans

Guna Moran: Guna Moran, winner of Creator Of Justice Award honoured by International Human Right Art Festival 2020, is an internationally acclaimed poet and book reviewer. His poems are published in more than 150 international magazines, journals, webzines, newspapers, blogs, anthologies and have been translated into thirty languages around the world. He has three poetry books to his credit. He lives in Assam, India.

MANAGING CHANGE

Only thing permanent

in one's life is—

Change.

One has to effectively

handle, manage,

For smooth transition.

Once Change happens,

Both internal and

external factors,

Affect one's life—

Positive or negative.

Handling, managing

Appropriately is important.

To effectively manage—

Accept Change,

Adjust to anything new,

Adopt new practices,

Adapt to the changed

Situation, Environment.

Resist not, to any Change—

In Personal or professional life.

Handle, manage Change.

Jagadish Prasad: I am a writer residing in Hyderabad, Telangana, India. I am an HR and Media consultant/Resource Person and also a partner in an HR/Talent Resources consultancy company. I have contributed poems to the annual magazine of Chennai poets circle, Chennai. I have also contributed prose and poetry to the in-house magazine of IOB (Iobian).

SUNCAKES

Do you know how to make them?
They're supposed to be light
bright and full of vitamin C.
Everyone says you just glow
after eating one. My friend
had a shining recipe I kept
asking for. Suncakes stop you
from being cold, lost in frost.

I remember something about filling
golden pans with flowers, seeds…
sunflower seeds. Bake at
high noon, of course. If only
there were a suncake now to
have with hot cocoa. My friend
is so lucky wintering in Honolulu.

Who gave her that recipe anyway?

I’m the one who’s freezing!

Joan McNerney: She has been the recipient of three scholarships. She has recited her work at the National Arts Club, New York City, State University of New York, Oneonta, McNay Art Institute, San Antonio and the University of Houston, Texas as well as other distinguished venues. A reading in Treadwell, New York was sponsored by the American Academy of Poetry. Her poetry is found in many literary magazines. She has four Best of the Net nominations. The Muse in Miniature and Love Poems for Michael are both available on Amazon.com and Cyberwit.net. Just released is a new title At Work. This collection shows colorful snapshots of working women and men in their daily lives.

AIRE

we live in a world of invisible light

we see things that can never be

the obvious invisible in a clouded lens

that's what scares me

we drop bombs on people

bombs like guilt

bombs like expectations

bombs like disbelief

those bombs are devastating

but guess what

they are not real either

fear is the umbilical cord

that strangles us in the womb

our mirror is the screen on the inside wall of our skull

that's where our freedom is cut loose

Joe Kidd: He is a multi-award-winning songwriter, speech writer, music/film critic, and ordained minister, inducted into Michigan Rock & Roll Hall of Fame 2017, recipient of Michigan Governor's and US House of Representatives certificates for work promoting Peace, Social Justice, Cultural Diversity. He lives in Detroit Michigan USA with partner, author/vocalist Sheila Burke. He has a CD titled *Everybody Has A Purpose* 2015, a book of poetry titled *The Invisible Waterhole* 2020. His works appear in benefit recordings, Music For Japan, and Songs For Standing Rock, many poetry journals. He was on tour throughout North America and Western Europe.

TONIGHT YOU ARE MINE

Tonight you are mine.

Like an evasive cloud

I've passed through a hollow crowd

and carried you fine,

like a torment of sealed pain, proud;

profound separation in dry tears shine,

treasuring distance, elegant and divine.

Tonight you are mine.

Lying soft and naked

in my warm embrace,

set free all burdens sacred,

shed all guilt, shame and disgrace;

melt in my passion pristine,

as mellow grapes end in smooth wine.

Tonight, like a fistful of sand

I’ll carry you through the desert, grand.

Thirsty dunes writhe and breathe there

in seamless desire;

you'll flow free through

the gaps of my clenched finger.

Kakoli Ghosh: She is a poet/short story writer from Durgapur, West Bengal, India. She wears many hats—a freelance writer, painter, beauty advisor and jewellery designer and has a keen interest in music and art in general. Apart from contributing to various anthologies, she has also published a poetry book.

COMPOSER

Shall I compose for you a warm summer's night?
One filled with crickets and resting birds softly calling.
Of shimmering Alder leaves in the pale moonlight
as night owls glide silently upon wings stalling
while twinkling stars shine so very bright.

Shall I compose for you a cool autumn's day
walking through fields of pumpkin and barley.
Caressing each other's hands in that special way
while tossing sticks for our retriever, "Marley".
We stop to talk at the swing by the beautiful bay.

Shall I compose for you a cold first winter's snow?
Stepping outside and exhaling that steamy breath.
As flakes fall and land gathering to and fro
the snowmen dance, then a slow melting death.
The warming sun renders a grin from the willow.

Shall I compose for you a sweet spring kiss?

Hearing the songbirds sing in the greening trees

and sprouts raise their blooms, and we reminisce

of that lovely feel of a springtime breeze.

I compose for you a life that goes on just like this.

Ken Allan Dronsfield: He is a disabled veteran and prize-winning poet from New Hampshire, now residing in Oklahoma. A proud member of the Poetry Society of New Hampshire, he has five poetry collections to date: The Cellaring; A Taint of Pity; Zephyr's Whisper; The Cellaring Second Edition; and Sonnets and Scribbles. Ken has been nominated three times for the Pushcart Prize and six times for Best of the Net. He was First Prize Winner for the 2018 and 2019 Realistic Poetry International Nature Poetry Contests. He has recently begun producing Creative Content on his YouTube channel and has had wonderful success sharing his poetry. Ken loves writing, thunderstorms, and spending time with his cats Willa and Yumpy.

RESONANCE

I gather an armful of darkness...

I lean on the spirit supreme.

Feel the butterflies flutter in flight…

You gave them all to me,

Covered with the silvery wings of stars…

and they settle softly, glowing in the dark.

The moon stayed away that night...

But the orchestra of intense silence hummed!

A music resonated in my soul...

A sonorous deepness.

An electric, intense vibration...

An embracing of static sound.

I got lost in the void.

In the deep darkness,

I want to pause...

In the middle of this incredible beauty of celestial laws,

I anchor my footsteps,

To the rock that is you,

Surrounded with the aura of deepest deepness.

Ketaki Mazumdar: She is a poet from Kolkata. She moved to Mumbai after her marriage and excelled in her career as an educationist and was privileged to receive the National Award for Excellence in Teaching from the then President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. She is now retired and indulges in her passion for writing poetry and authoring children's books. Her poems touch on life, death, nature, women, spiritual and the mystical. She is a prolific writer and has contributed to poetry sites and anthologies. Her poems have been acknowledged widely, both in India and abroad. Ketaki enjoys doing poetry readings and continues to transform lives through her writings.

IN THESE SPIKED TIMES...(CORONA CENTRED)

May's heat, in these spiked times,
Sends pulse on a rickety spin,
tossing between hope that shouldn't flag
and fear choked in the interstices.
Bricked in silence within four walls
Is a sentence imposed by the Inscrutable,
a stiff quilt to outflank winter!

My senses glow when a serene cuckoo
Wings to the next tree, a fluffy pigeon
Doodles a lullaby to a waking dawn,
When the slivers of light beam across
the grill…but lost for now to human smell.
Lost for now but not hopefully for ever?

We have exulted when dew goblets
Moistened the bud of joy and growth,

Glowing rivulets flowed in a

Serpentine route to a destination,

A desired goal post, flag of triumph!

Did we hazard a guess as to what

sniffed in the heart of aerosols?

Never! The long flowing memory

Could not disown, let alone discard

The perils of ineptitude, pages marred

By terrible suffering and pain of deaths!

We fall by the wayside, pick our sagging

bones to yank our frame, stand up!

Live for another day to hoist the post.

Hope is beating of wings,

happiness sensing the blue sky!

K.S.Subramanian: I am a poet and short story writer living in Chennai. I have published two volumes of verse through Writers Workshop, Kolkata. I have nine published short stories and also poems in several anthologies. ‘Dreams’ got the Asian Age prize.

SKY

She kept her home cosy

Table laid the teapoy ready

Snug and glitzy artistry

In her domestic hold

A canopy of blazing lights

Of love in darkness

Patchworks of flashy blues, greens

Embroidered flowers, inverted horses

Ostentatious elephants, gaudy faces

With cherry dots between cold pensive eyes

Cosmetic lashes, groomed tresses

Edging painted lips

Showcases, lamps, crystals, dinner displays

Dim with candles always awaiting the sun

When the storm broke in

She looked through at the outside jettying in

No walls, only a heap of dry incinerated hopes

Thorny cacti, shrunken flowers

Burnt grass, leaves, cinders

She started building once more

This time not a home

But a sky...

Laksmisree Banerjee: Prof. Dr. Laksmisree Banerjee is an established Poet, Writer, Literary Critic, Editor, Educationist and Vocalist. An Ex-Vice Chancellor and University Professor of English and Culture Studies, she has Eight Books of Poetry, 160 Research Publications and Academic Books on the diverse areas of Literature, Art and Culture. Dr. Banerjee is a National and International Sr. Fulbright and Commonwealth Scholar, having taught, lectured and recited her Poetry and Music in premier Universities and Festivals across the globe. She has several Awards and International Assignments to her credit. A Multiple Paul Harris Fellow and Rotarian she believes in using her Pen and Voice for Social Change. Dr. Banerjee is the Indian Rashtrapati's Nominee on Boards of Central Universities.

It's days like this

When I know that I’m loved by Jesus

It's days like this

When I remember what the Lord has done

And I know for certain

That He's not done

It's days like this

When I think about back then

And with emotion

I thank God for John 10:10

The enemy came to kill, steal and destroy

But Jesus came and gave me life

And even added three children and my wife

When many said go

We don't want you

He said, “Come,

I have a plan for you”

When I slept in toilets and others yards

He was a Shelter for me

Lord, how could I ever

Stop thanking Thee

You pulled me

Out of slime

Took me away

From crime

He will forever be

My King

Leroy Abrahams: He lives in South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Helenvale. He currently works as a Spot Welder at a Motor Industry Firm. He is a Published Author and enjoys writing poetry. His first book entitled, 'Verse en Inspirasie' was published by Selwyn Milborrow (Milborrow Media). His second book entitled, 'Testimony in Poetry' was published by Bevan Boggenpoel, and the third book entitled, 'In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection,' which he wrote together with Bevan Boggenpoel, Selwyn Milborrow, and Don Beukes was published by Milborrow Media. His poetry describes himself and how God has transformed his life. He is also a member of a Master Class group of writers as well as Afrikaanse Digters.

A MONUMENT TO LOVE

Within each heart is planted hopes and dreams.

I'm always trying to figure out how much love my heart can contain.

The width and length give no clue, neither does its thickness,

nor does the depth to the center, but its purpose is clear.

There is muscle memory which tells so much.

I know it holds love. I know it carries veneration.

In sorrow, it does not break as much as gain weight.

I suppose when everyone

I have ever loved has passed on,

it will become a stele.

Linda Imbler: Linda Imbler's poetry collections include six published paperbacks: *Big Questions, Little Sleep, Big Questions, Little Sleep" second edition (expanded with 66 additional poems), Lost and Found, Red Is The Sunrise, Bus Lights, Travel Sights,* and *Spica's Frequency.* Soma Publishing has published her four e-book collections, *The Sea's Secret Song, Pairings,* a hybrid of short fiction and poetry, and *That Fifth Element,* and *Per Quindecim.*

Examples of Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at lindaspoetryblog.blogspot.com. In addition to writing, she helps her husband, a Luthier, build acoustic guitars and steel strings in Wichita, Kansas, U.S.A. They are currently working on number 10.

IF I COULD

If I could be able to count the stars

And could recognize their voice

I would have surely reached your destination

I would have asked them to shine down your path

Evading dark and clear your vision

I would request them to stay little longer

In your home, blessing you and guiding you

To focus on your obligation

I would tell them to deliver you riches and promotion

For a better horizon

I would say to them to take my part of happiness

And give it to you; this will give me solace to my procrastination

I would make them aware how much

your smile is precious for me and so is your aspiration.

Lopamudra Mishra: She resides in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. She completed her graduation in English Hons from Sailabala Women's college, Cuttack, and post-graduation in English from Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. Her fascination for writing came from her grandfather and father from an early age. Writing for her is the powerful medium of expression. Her poems have been published in many magazines and anthologies. Her works include her very own published books ***Rhyme of Rain; First Rain; Tingling Parables; Rivulet of Emotions; and Red Tulips.***

MY SANITY

It is so hard not to feel sad or cry

Whenever thoughts about us pry

Inseparables, our always being together

Unconditional, our loving each other

I choke at the mere mention of your name

Impossible for me and my fiery feelings to tame

Impossible, it is so difficult to stop myself

Helpless, it is so hard to hold myself

Ardent desire, kissing on your lips

Not being able to, my heart severely dips

Dying, I long to be in your arms again

Desperate, I long to be kissed by you again

I shudder, will you ever know of my loving you

What should I do? How to convey it you

Praying, Should I request the love angels in the sky?

To take my message of love, let me try

Will you come, when you get my message dear?

Come darling, I am waiting for you it's now clear

I have cried my heart out pining for you

It has been ages of living afar from you

A minute more, seems like eternity

Come my darling, and save my sanity

Lubna Ahmed: She is a Certified Master NLP (Neurological Linguistic Programming) Practitioner; NLP Workshop Facilitator and Soft Skills trainer; and Certified Advanced Life Coach. She conducts SuperKoolKids Art Therapy workshops. She resides in Delhi with her family. She has managed to carve a niche for herself in the literary world by her ever so simple 'Love poems'. 'Princess Lubna' is her pen name, her writers' identity. Her love poems are spiritual and have a Mystical Aura. She has written many poems for National and International Anthologies. She is an avid traveller.

MY COFFEE

My coffee is not sweet

Not loaded with sweetness like yours

It is bitter

With that added stress on the 'R'

Like you do

A fragrant

Flavoursome bitterness

Just like that first sin of us

I see it brew

In that caraffe of clear water

Racing around

Warming up

Colouring the pure water

In brown

A deep dark coffee brown

My brows frown

As I concentrate

On the bubbles

And the froth

Making love

Then breaking down

Tired

And then it is time for me

To add that pinch of salt

Balancing the sweetness

The sweetness of your coffee

And the sweetness in you

To drown

Drown in the bitterness

Of the brown brew

Soaking in the first sin

Together with you

Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayyar: She is a bilingual writer (writing both in Hindi and English). A poetess, blogger, lifeskills counsellor, healer, she is also a social commentator and works with women and children. She is the author of "THE NIGHT JASMINE AND OTHER LOVE POEMS". She is the winner of ICON OF THE YEAR-LIFESKILLS COUNSELLOR 2015-2016, CREATIVE WRITER OF THE YEAR 2016, and Indian Women Achievers Award 2016 for Creative Writing.

PARCEL OF LOVE

The year has come to a close

shedding a new light

We are all waiting for a pin prick

a jab of secured life

To ooze out our contagion

our fears of touching death

that’s usually unannounced

At a time when we are decluttering

reshuffling organizing

to decorate our life's tree

Placing well thought out presents

for our loved ones, as Santa gifts

I wrap my renewed faith

my love and trust for you

in a parcel tagged ‘Myself’

in an ethereal place for you

As you snug in bed, eyes closed

it's gonna unwrap for you

You'll find yourself beside me

even on a hill top!

Madhu Sriwastav: Madhu Sriwastav is an academic, writer, poet, translator, and reviewer. She writes to express herself about anything that catches her fancy and touches a chord. She is based in Kolkata. She has published in several International and National anthologies and journals. She is a regular GloMag contributor.

SILENT NOTES

I hid in my soul

the sound of your murmuring voice,

When I breathe, I tend

to hear them again and again

Whispering sweet notes of a symphony

Uplifting my mind, bringing a smile on my face

The closeness, the earnestness of the cohesive bond

Caressing my parched heartland

With the sweet sensation of

adamant emotions on rising bereft of any apprehension

Loud and clear, sometimes tiptoeing...

The cool breeze transcends distance and time

And when it tickles, ruffling my tresses smooth

The way clouds hover

and when it rains drizzling raindrops

Fiddling, softly tantalising

Brazenly beautiful

And I dance along

because your words

Are the sweet songs of longings

That keeps reverberating deep in my heart

time to time...!

Madhu Jaiswal: She is a bilingual poet, writer and social worker hailing from the city of joy, Kolkata. She is associated with The Impish Lass Publishing House, Mumbai, in the capacity of an executive editor. Her creative contributions have been published in various national and international anthologies and she often gets featured in various prestigious e-zines. She was recently featured in the prestigious anthology Aatish 2 alongside various stalwarts. She bagged third prize in Beyond Black Sakhi Annual Poetry Awards 2019-2020. She is attached to a social group named Share A Smile and volunteers for social causes and upliftment of the destitute.

Some days when my paints are dry

And my canvas wet, I paint a girl in my head

A girl as murmur, a girl as breeze

A girl as drizzles depositing in a stream

Growing birds and leaves

From inside her crevices in cheeks

Splintering hues, I paint a girl less but a garden more

A garden less but a rainbow more

A rainbow less but magic more

Magic less, a poem more

A poem more, a poem more

I paint a girl less but a poem more

Manisha Manhas: Manisha is a Poet residing in Pathankot. She has been published in many national and international journals. Writing poetry is a cathartic experience for her.

SURROUNDED

Surrounded among the chaotic existence

covered in the danger of storm

trying to run, doesn't matter how far I run

the doubts shielded my soul

Drowning under the depth of my thoughts

teary eyes losing their sight

the howling wind engulfing me within

merging my hopes into despair

Still, surrounded by the chaos

the soul burning deep with failure

Time stopped, looking at me

the season also fumbled

leaving me alone

in a road that doesn't have a turn

Mehak Varun: She is the author of three books - THE HUMANE QUEST (volume-1, 2, & 3), published by Authorspress, New Delhi. She has been bestowed with '100 Inspiring Authors of India' award in Kolkata. She has also been honored with the 'Women of Influence 2019' award presented on women's day in New Delhi. Along with her books, her work has been published in various anthologies and she is recipient of various other prizes in poetry competitions as well.

(mehakgrover@amartex.com)

PRECIOUS MOMENT

At first it was hard to believe

That you love me too

In that silent moment

I found my life

A love so precious

A love so passionate

I didn’t know myself well

Until I met you my love

Just a glimpse of your face

A million stars in the sky I see

Fantasies screaming in my mind

When you first touched me

My desires richly fulfilled

My dreams come true

Can’t think of a better life

But to be with you baby

With you I’m everything

You’re God sent to me

To be with you forever

Until my last breath

Merlyn Alexander: I’m a poetess residing in Nagercoil, India. I’m a housewife. My passions include writing, cooking, and painting. I have contributed to many anthologies. I have published six books of Haiku Poetry. I’m currently waiting for my first anthology of English poems to be published soon.

ALBERTA BOUND

I own a gate to this prairie

that ends facing the Rocky Mountains.

They call it Alberta—

trails of endless blue sky

asylum of endless winters,

the hermitage of indolent retracted sun.

Deep freeze drips haphazardly into spring.

Drumheller, dinosaur badlands, dried bones,

ancient hoodoos sculpt high, prairie toadstools.

Alberta highway 2 opens the gateway of endless miles.

Travel weary, I stop by roadsides, ears open to whispering pines.

In harmony North to South

Gordon Lightfoot pitches out a tune-

“Alberta Bound.”

With independence in my veins,

I am a long way from my home.

Michael Lee Johnson: He lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era and is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, amateur photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, DuPage County, Illinois. Mr. Johnson is published in more than 1098 new publications, and his poems have appeared in 40 countries. He edits, publishes ten poetry sites. Michael Lee Johnson has been nominated for two Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1 Best of the Net 2016/2 Best of the Net 2017, 2 Best of the Net 2018. Two hundred seventeen poetry videos are now on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos

Under the scorching sun

Or in the downpour

There's only one man

The one who bore

The weight of the ones

He adored

The father he was

With love galore.

He had a dream

For his son and daughter

The only goal

He sought after

To make them stand

On their own feet

Fearing neither the cold,

Nor the heat.

He remained fair and just

With honesty, all could trust.

His journey brought him glory,

The love of those who must.

Their success was

The pride he wore.

The father he was

With love galore.

Nazia Islam: I am a teacher, currently residing in Dhaka, Bangladesh. As an Early Childhood Educator by profession, my dream is to make a difference in the world by shaping the minds of the future generation. I write out of passion, and sometimes, out of whim. I love Nature, books and simplicity, and the sound of rain.

LOVE

Love is humble

It makes royal,

Love is marble

It remains loyal.

A game of heart

Drawing the art,

Linking the chart

Clearing the mart.

If you make it a gamble

It will crumble

And leave you in shamble.

If you make it a garden

It will harden

And grow vegetation.

Love is a platform

It can reform,

Killing the worm

And cankerworm.

Ngozi Olivia Osuoha: I am a poet/writer/thinker residing in Nigeria. I currently enjoy my work as a writer. I have contributed to over forty international anthologies. I have also published three poetry books and co-authored one, and published over two hundred and fifty poems/articles in over twenty countries. Some of my pieces have been translated and published in different languages too.

Night is a cross I bear

Sleep, the unrelenting lover

on the threshold of

wide open eyes

I beseech; she denies

I beg ; she rebuffs

So linger the insomniac hours

Then as the last star fades

From the ash silver canvas

Of a brightening blue sky

She slides in; an act of almsgiving

And my day drifts in dreams

I wish

Daydreaming wasn’t a delusion

Nikhat Mahmood: She is a self-employed teacher of English Creative Writing, a short story writer and an occasional poet. She has translated from Urdu to English and also transliterated in Hindi, a book of poems ‘Zard PattoN ki Shawl’ written by a prominent Pakistani poet. Several of her stories have been published in various anthologies and magazines. She is currently working on her debut book of short stories, ‘Scent of the Bitter Almonds’ and a novel, ‘Revived Oaths’. She lives in Karachi with her husband and two children.

PRIME ROSE ON THE DUST..!

Like a devil

Your absence takes pleasure

In my aching soul

Stirring life into a poisonous hole,

Your memories echo

Like the roaring waves ashore.

The old air that we had breathed together,

Suffocates me now,

Within the so-called home once we shared,

And there, eyes probe in oblivion,

Here and there to find

Remnants of you that I cared..!

Forbidding the lapping thoughts,

Shedding now like autumn leaves,

In the wrap of this never ending fall

And I am like a caged bird,

Yell for freedom to accept the departure,

For a little strength to accept forever,

For no return you are now gone.

Now my longing for your voice,

Like the primrose on the dust,

Blooms amidst all these dead silence,

A few words of poesy still without you..!

Nitusmita Saikia: She is a bilingual writer from Assam, India She is presently working as instructor in National Cadet Corps. Apart from poetry, she also writes short stories and plays, and has been writing for magazines like FM, GloMag, Tuck Magazine and Innsaei Magazine. Her poems have been published in many national and international anthologies. She is also a regular writer in local newspapers, blogs etc.

LOVE IS BALANCE, IS COMPROMISE

Love is not biological

Love is not chemical

Love is not elemental

Love is a circus act

Balanced high on a tightrope

Waiting and watching

Deciding to walk or fall

Love is the art

Of creating oranges

When life gives you lemons

Love is the lump of coal

Filling your heart

Just waiting to be turned

To a diamond

Love is

The delicate balance

Giving you the will to live.

Nivedita Karthik: She is a graduate in Immunology from the University of Oxford. She is an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer and published poet. She also loves writing stories. Her poetry has appeared in several national and international anthologies. Her microfiction has been published by The Potato Soup Literary Journal. She also regularly contributes to the open mics organized by Rattle Poetry. She currently resides in Gurgaon, India, and works as a senior associate editor. Her blog http://justrandomwithnk.com is where she writes about – you guessed it – random topics that catch her fancy. She also has a YouTube channel, JustrandomwithNK, where she uploads some videos. She is currently working on her first book of poems.

THE OLD HOUSE

The façade of the old building seemed to stare
quizzically back at me when I stood in front of it,
I had questions, it had answers, vague, but comforting

My ancestral home: home to me in the long hot summers
childhood, full of gaiety and laughter,
Myriad cousins, a plethora of experiences

But faded with time, moving away.
The house is now occupied by people
Who are clueless about its history?

it's bare windows like wise eyes
Look into my soul, knowing,
It tells me to walk away,

but just take away the memories,

Bitter sweet, poignant and an anchor

during stormy turmoiled reminiscences

urges the importance of a façade ,

so vital to the roles we play in life at different stages

Padmini Rambhatla: I am a poet, teacher and homemaker residing in Chennai, India. I work as a high school English teacher. I have contributed to Glomag and my children's school magazine. I have not published anything so far but in the near future, I will. I also enjoy painting in different mediums, watching movies and listening to music.

RESONANCE

Resonate with me.

Let us do all the things

I ache and crave

And dream of doing

Together.

If you resonate with me

I will consider myself

Lucky in love

If you do not...

I will learn to live with

My achings, cravings

And unfulfilled dreams

Walk alongside void for

A constant companion

And still love you.

Panjami Anand: Greetings, I am but a speck in the world, aspiring to be as aware and genuine as possible. My poems are fragments of my soul. Thank you for running your palms through them.

TENETS OF LOVE

The greens in my mind
go ablaze when it rains
on the sprouts of love
neither ravages nor shatters manifest.
Sensations lying magnetized
our impinging thoughts build castles in the air
we compete with each other to make the other win
the one loses wins at the end, we know.
All esoteric tenets of love
its power imponderable.

Your whispers of endearments
exhilarate my dreams,
assuage cluttered sentiments
like darkness wallowing fades away.
Once power is switched on,
shards of pains evaporate like heated camphor,

lighten past blemishes, eat up pallor

with the retribution of an unyielding rival,

sunken passions germinate in galore,

nurture my souls' cravings

dormant in secret caves, unfathomable,

bring new verve, new hopes,

lift us both to the peak of ecstasy's tower

ooze life from each cleft of our beings.

Pankajam Kottarath: Pankajam, retired from BHEL as DM/Finance is a bilingual poet and novelist settled at Chennai, India. In addition to several poems, book reviews and articles published in national and international journals, she has twenty-eight books to her credit, including fifteen books of poems, a translated poetry collection in French and three fictions in English. Three books on literary criticism discuss her works in detail. A book of critical essays and research papers on her poems edited by Dr. S Barathi titled "Poetic Oeuvre of K. Pankajam" has also been published. She has won many awards for poems and short stories including Rock Pebbles National Literary Award 2019, Haven International's Eclat Award 2021.

THE PARAMOUNT FEELING

Love has no definition.

It is on the parched earth, the first drop of rain.

It is like the healing of pain.

When all is lost you still don't lose hope.

You know you are loved; you have a second scope.

Love is not mere fascination.

It is reaching out to the one you love.

It is bringing peace, flying of a dove.

You don't judge people you love; you encourage them.

You support them but nothing in return claim.

Love is not only heart's trepidation.

It is the beating of heart together.

It is helping each other grow further and further.

You are there when he needs you.

Respecting each other's space, each other's view.

Love is not an impulsive reaction.

It is controlled and passionate.

It is seeking knowledge together, a treasure gate.

Responsibility is utmost in this paramount feeling.

Taking hardships for each other in life's swirling.

Paramita Mukherjee Mullick: I am Dr. Paramita and I live in Mumbai, India. I am a scientist transformed into a globally loved, award-winning poet. I believe in positivity, and through my writings, I try to spread positivity, hope, peace and love. My poems have been widely published in Indian and foreign journals. I have published eight books. Some of my poems have been translated into 39 languages. I have started and am the President of the Mumbai Chapter of the Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library (IPPL). I am also the Cultural Convenor and the Literary Coordinator (West India) of the International Society for Intercultural Studies and Research (ISISAR).

Kuku, kuku, kukooooooooo

First sounds I hear

Sipping my coffee

Smoking my cigarette

I hear kuku.

Lost in those sounds

I look for the bird

I am not a bird watcher

Sounds excite me

Theatre-person waiting to hear the right sounds

Aha, Oho, mmm

Birds help me

Every animal helps me

Let us sound-communicate.

Parasuram Ramamoorthi: He is a poet with three published volumes of poetry: Norwich Musings; Fire courts Water; and Neem Gita. He is a playwright, with twelve plays published and performed. He is an Autism Advocate and Pioneer in the field of Drama for Autism. He is the Chairman of VELVI: ***www.velvi.org***

THERAPY

Listen, soft crash of my waves alter your
brain patterns, feel my sand exfoliate,
your skin as my unevenness makes floor
walk harder, works your calves and thighs. A state

of meditation lulls, slows your heart beat,
deepens your breath. My blue sky and sun shoot
up your body feel good drugs, my heat
and negative ions ensure reboot.

I massage the vagus nerve in your neck,
enough for all this to happen. Watch fish
in rockpools provide aquariums check
your stress, rejuvenate a hug and kiss.

I'm health resort, recommunion,
refresher, renewer, good reunion.

Paul Brookes: He is a shop assistant, poet and interviewer. He has had work broadcast on Radio Three, The Verb. His most recent work is “Wonderland in Alice plus other ways of seeing”.

Curtains fall on another Navarathri season,

Nine days of sparkling festivities, music and fervour,

Prayers, pleasantries and presents,

Sweets and savouries,

Wishes folded in betel leaves and nuts,

Turmeric and saffron,

Jasmine and bangles,

Mirrors and blouse pieces.

Also,

This time,

Masks and sanitizers,

Work from home and online classes,

Social distancing and safety protocols.

Hope reigns supreme

As we wait for the graduation day to throw away our masks

And show our smiles to the world!

Prabha Prakash: I am a poet based in Kerala. I am a Chartered Accountant and work as Assistant Manager with EY. My first poetry collection ‘Lost Monsoon’ was published by Writers Workshop, Kolkata in 2018. I have been selected for the Reuel International Poetry Prize 2019.

EVERYDAY I GET MYSELF BUTCHERED

Every day I gather

dew droplets from the blades of green grasses,

Anguished protest of stray dogs barking at night in unison,

Every day I gather

Some beats of my heart,

lying on the track after the train

leaves the station.

I stare at the star-studded night’s sky

I stare at the Earth and its flowery eyes

Every day I gather stars and petals

Every day I gather from the deserted, doomed city its crying eyes.

Every day, I sell a portion of the sky at throwaway prices.

I know, life without the sky is akin to a head without imagination.

Every day I get myself butchered by an unknown assassin and gather all the dismembered parts just to sell at the slaughterhouse.

Prahallad Satpathy: Dr. Prahallad Kumar Satpathy, who hails from Odisha (India), is a bilingual poet writing both in Odia and English. He is a retired Associate Professor of Economics. To his credit, he has four published anthologies in Odia language. His poems are published in many national and international journals. He has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy twice as an honorary member.

SUSPENDED ANIMATION

Time stands still,

Rather made to stand still,

We are in a wormhole, almost another dimension,

God like he/she is, our breath in their hands,

To heal, we have been knocked out,

Our senses suspended, our memories erased,

Only the soul sees the shadowy figures,

Working on the body,

Cutting, stitching, mopping up our life giving fluids,

Repairing our machines,

Putting in spare parts if need be,

When all set and done, we are led through a tunnel,

Into the bright light of consciousness,

Senses surging back,

We are a thinking, pulsating, throbbing in pain, alive body,

Back among the living, given a second chance at life,

Let us salute today,

The gate keeper, the anaesthetist,

The almost invisible, silent worker,

Who safeguards our life chord,

To allow healers to do their job!

Pratima Apte: She is a poet residing in Pune, India. She is a homemaker and a grandmother. She used to write sporadically in the Pune edition's Women's page of the Indian Express. She loves reading and writing, and words are her world.

THAT SCARLET SCARF

That scarlet scarf reminds me of your fragrance

When eyes met the blue-eyed girl for the first time

My fancy's wing soars higher and higher

Through the shimmering waters of river Brahmaputra

Somewhere an earthen lamp brightens up

the browny earth with vibrant colors,

In the middle of the corn field

Heart sings lullaby in tenderness.

In the vast azure

under the ancient trees,

When mind rests in peace and stillness

When cuckoo's soulful song

Hums softly in the ears of the breeze

Dreamy eyes dance

to the tune of love and mirth.

In the vast azure

When sunflower kisses your rosy cheeks

When thousands of fireflies dance in your youthful lens

The pinnacle of the evening woods

Merges with the bluish water of the ancient river

and my sorrows melt in the seamless beauty

Leaving behind footprints on the shoreline.

Preety Bora: Hailing from a beautiful state of Assam, India, the poetess, Mrs Preety Bora started writing from her college days. She lives in a city called Golaghat with her family. Nature inspires her to write poetry. She writes in both languages: in English and in Assamese (her mother tongue). Her poems have been published in various anthologies and magazines in India and in foreign countries.

DUSK AND DAWN

Sometimes it is hard to know,

which is dusk and which is dawn.

For was the day a mere eclipse,

careening into the blackness

of unending night?

...Or is night but an eye-blink,

waiting for the light to come,

first in trickles,

and then in torrents?

Sometimes it is hard to know,

which is dusk and which is dawn.

Raamesh Gowri Raghavan: He is a Thane-based epigraphist, historian, copywriter and poet. He has been published in several anthologies and magazines. He is the editor of Narrow Road Literary Journal, a e-zine of poetry, haibun and flash fiction.

ALL THROUGH EYE GLASS…

Of all precious,

Power of vision,

Prime in the body,

Unique God's Gift;

The whole world is

Darkened, morning

merges with evening,

only a tap substitute

for the blind; tap, tap

till you reach your

destination, for blind

totally, unwholesome;

those with loosening power

glasses, aid these days,

a must for reading, seeing,

just mutual care, for it protects

you, you in turn protect them;

take care, take care, your

computer your addiction,

gives a warm presage,

who can gainsay it?

Radhamani Sarma: She graduated from Ethiraj College in English Literature and did her post-graduation from Venkateswara University, Tirupati. She specialized in plays by W. H. Auden for her doctoral thesis from the University of Madras. She is a retired Professor of English from Pachaiyappas college, Chennai, with 31 years of teaching experience. She has published four books of poems and one book of short stories. She has been widely published and anthologized in various journals and websites, and is also a Reviewer and Critic. Currently, she is into mainstream poetry and haiku-related verses, with a keen interest in Cherita poems.

Pearlradhe.blogspot.in

pearlradhe.wordpress.com

FLOODING OF THE MGENI

innocently hurrying

your swollen arms

clutch people and possessions

in your wake

among rooftop islands

water boils coldly

plaintive cry of roosters

sounding death

canoe floats in backyard pool

sordid remnants

of peoples hopes lie sodden

and so cold

trapped so helplessly

dog is set free

by man who's

lost all

Mgeni – river in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Raj Isaac: He is a South African who lives in Durban, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. He is a descendant of indentured labourers who first came to the province in 1860. He is a retired educator who was involved in the teaching and supervision of English at various levels. He holds several academic qualifications, including a B.A. Honours degree in English as well as a Masters degree in Education. He has had his writings featured in various local publications and has also published two books—a family history and a collection of short stories and flash fiction. His writing journey is recorded in his Facebook page, "The stories I write".

https://www.facebook.com/Raj.M.Isaac/

YOU MADE ME MY SON

No, my child will never know the man

you met in the class. I am not that man

you sired everyday my son.

Thank you for making me,

every time I entered, at least (for want

of a better word I borrow this mythical term)

a “demi-God”, for nothing less would do justice

to the awe in your eyes. Together we were: the magical

flow of knowledge you invented in me. Alone,

I am a summer dry bed of that stream.

Only if those days could return!

Only if that river could swell once more!

Rajnish Mishra: He is a poet, writer, translator and blogger born and brought up in Varanasi, India, and now in exile from his city. His work originates at the point of intersection between his psyche and his city. He edits PPP Ezine and writes at:

https://rajnishmishravns.wordpress.com/

EVERYBODY LOVES A BRIGHT SUNSHINE

Tearing apart the veil of darkness,
Sheet of resplendent sunrays has covered
The fathomless vacuum of sky azure;

General mood on earth is abundantly buoyant,
As the bright sunshine is gently caressing
The green leaves of the dancing
Trees and the colourful petals of the
Blooming flowers; rainbow-coloured butterflies
And humming beetles are flitting leisurely
In the broad daylight; birds
Are flapping their wings in a bid
To take a flight towards unknown destinations;

People are busy in their daily chores,
Fully charged with enthusiasm and energy,
Gifted to them by the glorious sun’s

Benediction; life is going on

With usual verve and vigour for

All the living beings inhabiting the universe;

The blazing glory of the ascendant sun

Is pervading here and there, everywhere.

Rakesh Chandra: Mr Rakesh Chandra is a retired civil servant. He is currently pursuing his PhD in Law from Lucknow University. He has two published collections of poems, titled ‘Moon is Black’ and ‘Circle Of Life’. He also has one collection of Hindi poems. His English poems have found place in different poetry journals and newspapers’ literary supplements. He also has authored two books on Law.

TANKA

yes the time stands still

amid the stunning splendours

some fire-like roses

rainbow of your ceaseless thoughts

purple mist of blue roses

****

iconic morning

lo unblocks her abundance

the world is swept off

as she pouts get sun-red lips

love leaps out like a dolphin

****

pink, purple- blue red

the clouds in the zircon sky

untranslatable

delicacies of colours

become butterflies of joy

Ranjana Sharan Sinha: Dr. Sinha is an eminent poet, author and professor of English. She has a number of awards to her credit for her contribution to poetry. Her poems from her collection 'Scents and Shadows' are included in the syllabus of Purnea University. She has the honour of receiving a commendation from the former President of India, A P.J. Abdul Kalam for her poem, 'Mother Nature' contained in her collection 'Spring Zone'. She has received several other awards. Her poems, short stories, articles and research papers have been widely published in highly-acclaimed journals and anthologies. She has authored published nine books in different genres and 50 research papers.

PEACE INSIDE MYSELF

I have been waging Peace within myself all through

Fatigued of the agony, the ignominy that I cannot eschew

Rage subsumes me furiously in a regular way

Try as I might mightily, peace has never come to stay.

Prayer is my forte and I always pray with all my heart

I crave to clasp the coveted thing and yet there is no rapport!

Were it a bird, will I not sit on the shoulders of its wings

Or if it were a sheltered dress, would tie to its apron strings

What great feeling it would then give me, what great healing

With stars shining above me, surely would I go kneeling

With rumbling rage within, cannot even pretend to be a sage

Peace O Peace pacify a beleaguered me within your pious page

My heart is ruptured, almost a wreck but still can spot a speck

Of Peace; would yet hold on to its straw if salvageable from wreck!

I know I am fighting a winning war inside myself, a lasting détente

Will I surely secure, like quietude lodged in the heart of a serene savant.

I just need to wait, just need to expiate desires ever eager to update

Must carry on waging peace, waging peace sitting upright and sedate…

Ravi Ranganathan: He is a writer, poet and critic, and a retired banker settled in Chennai. He has to his credit three books of poems: Lyrics of Life; Blade of Green Grass; and Of Cloudless Climes. He revels in writing his thought-provoking short poems called ‘Myku’. He loves to write on Nature, Life and the human mind. He has won many awards for his poetry, including Poiesis Award for excellence of Poiesisonline; Sahitya Gaurav Award by Literati Cosmos Society; and Mathura and Master of Creative Impulse Award by Philosophyque Poetica. He contributes poems and articles regularly to monthly webzine ‘Literary Vibes’ and monthly e-magazine Glomag and quarterly International magazine ‘Metverse’.

THE MARRIED LOVERS

Because I did not love the way you did, it took me years to realise that

your Bengal cottons were draped around a lover

That you dressed prettily for eyes other than those in the mirror and my wide, curious ones

That drinking hot tea with him on a hotter afternoon was blatant lovemaking in public

That scraping the uruli after hours of payasam making and giving him the scraps said I love you in the sweetest way possible

That you were his before I pushed my way out between the two of you

and put my name on lips that had known only his before

You never corrected me

but you did say a lot of times that I had barely risen from the ground

Now that he is gone, the towering mountain of loss in your eyes blinds me

Reena Prasad: Reena R's poems have been published in The Copperfield Review, First Literary Review-East, Angle Journal, Poetry Quarterly, York Literary Review, Lakeview International Journal, Glomag, Duane's Poe Tree, Mad Swirl, etc. She is also the Destiny Poets UK's Poet of the Year for 2014 and one of the editors of The Significant Anthology released in July 2015. She was adjudged second in the 'World Union Of Poet's' poetry competition, 2016 and won an award for poetry in 2016 'As You Like It International Poetry Contest', commemorating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare. She won the Reuel International Prize for poetry, 2018.

KNIVES BETWEEN TREES

goddess,

riding exhausted allnighttrain,

pointless tonight

icestreets,

rivertoots,

merginglakes-

these rubbersoul dreams

emerge from drowningsouls,

impossible blizzards,

warm breakfastkitchens,

blendedlives to goneyears,

tiredstrangers endlessatmydoor,

prevailing knives between the trees

people lineup

Eskimos blindedatbirth,

making paintings wetwithorgans,

making paintings of lowerManhattan,

drowning in loftsofwords,

where they slipintolove

for no other reason than

iceroads,

persistentrebirths,

swelteringwinters,

anniversariesofvapor

and these dreamdamagedsouls at last emerge

from other drowninghearts,

while memories of endlesslywearystrangers

once again assault my midnight door,

mergingasone,

prevailing knives between the trees

Robert Feldman: He was inspired by members of Paterson's literary tradition. He was instrumental in publishing some of Arizona's most influential writers, and in 1980, collaborated with Lawrence Ferlinghetti on his Bisbee publication, "Mule Mountain Dreams." Currently, Robert resides in greater Phoenix, continuing to write, paint, and play tabla, besides actively publishing in several online poetry magazines. Hineni, a collection of 15 Hebraic photographic poetry published in Spring, 2018, and Sunflowers, Sutras, Wheatfields, and other ArtPoems in the summer of 2019. The body of Robert's writing and painting can be viewed at albionmoonlight.net; he can be reached at rffeldman@gmail.com.

ARRIVAL OF THE FALL

Between the muted walls

Of the small space

I call my own,

I displace all my belongings

Before the arrival of the Fall

And change the picture of my home

To resemble the colored world!

Like an artist’s palette

Filled with all magical colors:

Green, yellow, red and blue,

Each playing an important role

In my every day’s mood,

Even the shiny reflection of copper

Touches my inner-self,

When in my fortress, alone,

I am totally secluded

Before the arrival of the Fall!

The human’s heart

Was designed beyond

Heaven’s gate:

Interior-like the soul

But made separate

By self-possession and regret

Of beauty less than infinite!

Now here I am standing,

Clearly on solid ground

And proudly having

A mind of my own,

Feeling really great and

Patiently waiting for

The arrival of the Fall!

Romeo della Valle: Born in a beautiful island named Quisqueya or Hispaniola and from Italian and Spanish parents and coming to America very young with a goal, mainly, to succeed in life and be happy. I am a Man with a Vision and a clear mission: To spread my message of Love and Peace throughout the World and if my poetry can touch a single soul in the World, then I would gladly die leaving my clear footprints behind!

DIRT PILE ON AN INCLINE

By the hospital no one can remember
being admitted to, the fenced in helipad on the front lawn
and this dirt pile on an incline, wide at the bottom
and thinning towards the top, a floppy wind sock
of windless impotence on the adjacent flagpole
in corresponding orange and white stripes—
that sculpted white wash brick wall as though
everyone has the time and money if the hospital is willing to
go over-budget on general landscaping as well,
across from the $6 short term paid parking
that offers a monthly option for those on the long-mend,
the lifers and loss-of-lifers that will never walk out
of these large automatic doors again.

Ryan Quinn Flanagan: Ryan is a Canadian-born author residing in Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada with his wife and many bears that rifle through his garbage. His work can be found both in print and online in such places as: *Evergreen Review, The New York Quarterly, GloMag, The Poet Community, Red Fez, and The Oklahoma Review.* He enjoys listening to the blues and cruising down the TransCanada in his big blacked out truck.

WISHES FOR TONIGHT

Tonight, I wish that I could watch the stars

Blinking in the far skies; like a flock of fireflies

Glittering above the rooftops of absolute darkness

Tonight, I wish that, if I could stay on wet clouds

All the night, and wish to purge the pain of my heart

As if we blow off trembling candlelight.

Tonight, I wish that, if I could scream loudly by

Standing in the middle of the valley of silence

And to hear the echoes bouncing back from

The surrounding mountains of loneliness.

Tonight, I wish that, if I could oscillate in a swing that is

Made of rain threads and catch-up the shining moon

To brighten the face of my love

As it was her only condition for our love

Tonight, I wish that I could float in the air with her,

Like calyx flower and vanish in the clouds

Tonight and forever…

Saleem Raza (Saleem Kattuchola): A freelance writer and painter from Kerala, India. He works as Financial Consultant in HDFC Life, Kochi. He writes short stories, poems, and travelogues in various regional language magazines (Malayalam), periodicals under the pen name ‘Saleem Kattuchola’, and he used to write English poems and articles in international magazines and newspapers.

THE IDEA OF BEAUTY

Beauty—it's such a pretty word;

Conjures all sorts of delicacies in the mind.

Like a book with fragrant petals

Pressed in between it's binds.

Or the laugh of a little babe—

Sweet as honey, pure as gold.

A form of beauty everlasting,

One that's centuries and centuries old.

A toothy smile from a little child

On seeing a new playmate in the park.

True beauty blossoms and lies

In the friendship that between them starts.

"Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder",

And these are what it means to me—

Fragrant books, laughs and smiles.

So what's your idea of beauty?

Samixa Bajaj: I am a 17-year-old student from Guwahati, Assam. Besides writing, I love to read, dance and sketch. I also enjoy music.

BOHEMIAN MERMAID

She walks along the serrated edges of dawn—fearless

An orphan of the stars

She wears pain like a Tiara

Her eyes blazing amber—forged over fire

She’s walked past the corridors and alleyways of Hell

And now she strings her battle scars like sea shells

A Bohemian mermaid wandering through territories uncharted

She swings past tsunamis of uncertainty with the ease of a seasoned sailor

Having given her wings to the Phoenix

She lives, loves and thrives upon both flame and storm

She is both fire and ice—

Quiet chaos and a heart made of stardust

One that still sparkles of innocence...

You'll crave the burn, fear the cold

Of a woman who has lived, loved, lost and still survived it all

Without a flinch—

Painting the edge of dawn with the Rhapsody of moonlight

Samrudhi Dash: I am a poet, novelist, editor and motivational speaker, currently residing in New Delhi, India. I write under the pseudonym “Inara”. Along with contributions to over two dozen anthologies, international e-zines and magazines, I have published till date five solo poetry anthologies and three novels and conceptualised and edited four anthologies of different genres. Apart from writing and poetry, my other hobbies include crafting, painting and photography. I have recently published my third novel, ‘Letters from A Stranger—A Life Changing Map’, now available as an e-book on Amazon Kindle and figured in the Amazon Bestseller List at Rank 10.

SHRAVAN KISHORI

Shravan has come like bereaved Radhika

Tears roll down from those eyes,

kissing her cheeks.

As rain alights to kiss the land.

Shravan has come like crazy Rai kishori

Whom the sweet flute song churns and Smoulders

Like the monsoon breeze that heals but burns.

Oh Rai, hladini! Braid thy long curly hair

Adorn it with monsoon's loved blossoms.

Shed not tears from those kohl dark deep eyes.

Nawal Kishore will soon arrive.

Shravan has come like Abhisarika

Who left her home to embrace Mohan.

But, Oh! Madhava, a charade, why you didn’t come?

Shravan has come like Shyama

Tired of waiting who sat beneath Tamal.

Surrendered her soul to love.

Gently lifted up her face and Lo!

Found her Shyam just in front of her eyes !

In those showering dark clouds!

Loving and laughing mischievously!

Rai kishori, Rai, Hladini, Shyama: Different names of Sree Radhika.

Nawal kishore, Shyam, Madhava: Different names of Sree Krishna

Sanhita Sinha: She is a native of Tripura, is a teacher, and a bilingual poet. Her poems have been published in different prestigious national and international anthologies, journals and magazines. Apart from writing, as an elocutionist and as an actor, she is actively engaged in cultural activities. Along with stage, she is a regular artiste of television and radio too.

THE LAKE OF MEMORY

Chin in hand, she watched the lake,

where nothing appeared fake.

The happy, carefree laughter, the boisterous banter,

and an eight-year-old hyperactive mind

running away at a canter.

Bewitched by the colourful shikaras* sailing merrily,

she watched with stars in her eyes.

The solid houseboats standing with a stoic calm,

charmed the tiny one.

An old pheran* clad woman waved out to her

from her floating vegetable market, smiling broadly.

An unkempt man, sitting in his shikara with a fishing net,

frowned impatiently, while a flower vendor offered her a daffodil.

The gulls overhead, went round and round in circles.

And years passed.

I came back to the present, disoriented, as a lapwing overhead screeched.

The wind was sighing deeply and lugubriously.

The lake of my memory quickly stopped rippling,

as I found myself caught in a crippling

incarceration of my own making.

Shikara: A light, flat- bottomed boat

**** Pheran: A long, warm cloak that people in Kashmir wear in winter months.***

Santosh Bakaya: I am a poet, essayist, novelist, TEDx speaker, biographer, and creative writing mentor, critically acclaimed for my poetic biography of Mahatma Gandhi, 'Ballad of Bapu' and Ted Talk on 'The Myth of Writer's Block'. I have received the Reuel Award for poetry (2014); Setu International Award (2018); and Keshav Malik Award (2019). I write a weekly column, 'Morning Meanderings' in 'Learning and Creativity.Com', the first part of which is an e-book now. My two collaborative e-books, 'Vodka by the Volga' with Dr. Ampat Koshy and 'From Prinsep Ghat to Peer Panjal' with Gopal Lahiri have been Amazon bestsellers. My latest book is 'Runcible Spoons and Peagreen Boats.'

JUST A SMILE

A simple smile

Goes a mile

To make a day

And make the heart say

Thank you for being kind

I had a lot on my mind

Sara Bubber: She is a children's, teachers and parents storyteller with an educational background in child development. She loves developing her skills in storytelling, podcasting, video editing and making her own puppets. She has some lovely four-legged cuddle bags to keep her busy.

I WANT TO BE FREE NOT A CAGED BIRD

I am a princess

Who has been treated with utmost care

With maids of honour and red carpets

Lavender dew and rose petals spread on my bed

I was not allowed to go out alone with the man I loved most!

I felt like a caged bird

With clipped wings sitting alone the whole day n night

I took my decision to leave my comforts and ran away from the palace with just a white gown

I ran through the paddy field and enjoyed the feel of the earth on my feet

and listening to the cuckoos songs and the wild animals roaming in the green woods!

I am never going back

To a solitary life I lead

And enjoy all the simple worldly pleasures, eating yummy street foods and riding a hired bicycle falling down many a time!

I will find a farmer as my life partner and together we will plough and sow and reap our loves labour aplenty!

We both will serve the needy and poor

and end of the day we will rest on our wooden bench in our thatched hut

for a peaceful sleep!

Sarala Balachandran: I reside in Kolkata, West Bengal, with my family. My poems have been published in national and international anthologies. I am a contributing poet for Different Truths. I write free verses.

SIDEREAL NECTAR

Yellow neon fluorescence escaping

behind the cover of pines

full moon bows a graceful retreat

replaced by live wires and humming generators

I will write a poem on tea leaves

about ripened figs and the prince of parables

crown the skyline at five a.m.

while Venus dances to her own blinking pulse

electricity spells half of the story

a magnet clenched between teeth to attract the pull

cross-tide and chemical trails

hung from the wings of gods and ghosts

breathe deeply of the moment while it lasts

then beg for mercy that another arrives

Scott Thomas Outlar: He lives and writes in the suburbs outside of Atlanta, Georgia, USA. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. He guest-edited the Hope Anthology of Poetry from CultureCult Press, as well as the 2019, 2020, and 2021 Western Voices Editions of Setu Mag. Selections of his poetry have been translated into Afrikaans, Albanian, Bengali, Dutch, French, Italian, Kurdish, Malayalam, Persian, Serbian, and Spanish. He hosts a podcast, Songs of Selah, that airs weekly on 17Numa Radio and features interviews with poets, artists, musicians, and health advocates. More about Outlar's work can be found at 17Numa.com.

RENTED HOUSE—ENIGMA OR REVELATION

Living in a rented house

A sweet yet sour taste of spice

Mingling of love and bitterness

In the world of togetherness

A beautiful yet serene state of mind

Seemingly transient in totality

The beauteousness enchanting in its quality

Descending upon us in its entirety

House—or is it a home

Can we always call it a home

The mind seeking as it were

A thread of peace and tranquility

A home in its everlasting

Quotient of happiness

Body in which the soul dwells

A rented house being the sole reminder

Of a soul within the body

Shobha Warrier: I am a poet residing in Chennai. I am a housewife. I have contributed to a few anthologies. I have also published poems and also one collection of a few poems written by me.

There’s such comfort in crowds;

this world’s made for you, they say.

Dawn pries open your eyes,

or dusk gets you trembling,

remember there’s wise virtue in moving as one;

demand justice or crack open a skull,

join voice, you’re safe in your crowd-world.

Or stand apart and lose your halo

only if you’re singer, knave or king of words.

Shreekumar Varma: He is a poet, novelist, and playwright residing in Chennai, India. He has contributed to various anthologies. He has received the R. K. Narayan Award for Creative Writing.

www.shreevarma.com

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shreekumar_Varma

sound comes from silence

and dissolves back into it

there is silence in between thoughts

in between words

there is silence in between

acts, in between gasps,

in between lifetimes

in between breaths....

once in a while pause a bit

pause a bit to hear this silence

pause a bit to feel it

pause a bit to embrace it

pause a bit to face it

for

silence becomes eloquent

when stillness is reached and

in such spells of calmness

the Divine Himself speaks.!

Sindhu Rana: I am a poet and writer residing in Jalandhar, Punjab (India). I have contributed to various leading newspapers and journals, e-zines and anthologies. I am a script writer and voice-over artist for documentaries. However, reading and writing remain my first love.

A LOOK AT LIFE

Do you know where do you stand?

Do you know where you will be?

The equation between present and future

you never know

How can you assess your present

when you don’t know what is in store.

How can you define the present

in terms of sorrow and happiness

When you know not the moment next?

Go beyond yourself, (present self)

space and circumstance,

all pair of opposites,

love, hatred and relationship

to become yourself, (real self)

the individual you are,

the entity you always cherished to be.

Live without looking into

past, present and future

should be, would be and could have been.

Live with dreams and passion

in that beautiful island

which is all yours.

Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: Working in the Finance Services of Odisha, he is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer whose write-ups are published in newspapers and in various national and international magazines, journals and anthologies. His collections of poems and proses are published in his blogs. His has received the Order of Mahatma medal; Kairat Dussinov Medal for poetic excellence; Haven International Muse award in 2020; Order of Shakespeare, Double Cross gold medal from World Union of Poets. He has been awarded with the medal of International Faith Poet of the Year by Destiny Poet International Community of Poets, Wakefield, U.K.

THE FIGHT

With bald chemotherapeutic pates shining,

And bright, eager, hopelessly hopeful eyes,

Young and old, in all figures and physiques

Are united in a common cause

The fight against Cancer.

Braving inclement weather, the endless anticipation with racing pulses, as they wait outside the Doctor's chambers, for their names/numbers to be announced,

The murmuring and fluttering heart beating, as they suffer an existential crisis,

Joined in single harmony for a common cause,

The fight against Cancer.

The Doctors would be soon predicting their destiny,

Trying to soften the blow ironing out their anxiety, with a human touch,

While he examines, explains, investigates and finally pronounces,

What really sounds like a knell as he prepares the patient,

To fight against Cancer.

Who will understand the feelings of dread,

The shadows of doubt, of agonies revisited, the oscillation of fear, anger and helplessness,

The excruciating discomfort of chemotherapy, the trepidation of radiation,

The struggles between the physical and mental self, for the much needed strength and hope as rhetoric required,

To fight against Cancer?

Someeta Das: She is a retired Professor of English from Maharaja Manindra Chandra College, Kolkata. She has taught for twenty-seven years and is interested in writing short stories, stories on travel and poems.She has published in Glomag, Setu, Woman's Era and a number of e-zines.

Even before I was born

apart my parents were drawn

because my maternal grandfather

could not arrange the dowry demanded by my paternal grandfather.

My mother and I

were irritations in the eye

of all kith and kin

and referred to as the sin.

I never got toys or dolls to play

and learnt to make my own with clay.

I didn't go to school to learn to read and write

for someone like me it was deemed just not right.

I may be unlettered

but will not be fettered.

I won’t allow them get anywhere near,

not the second cousin, the neighbour or distant uncle who all leer.

Married off at fifteen, mother the next year—like mine and continuing hereditary practices is not for me.

Single and alive on my own terms is how I am going to be.

Sri N Srivatsa: I was born and brought up in Madras of yore and moved to New Delhi in 1978. I spent more time dabbling in fine arts before a career in banking. I worked both behind and on-stage in Tamil, English and Hindi productions of Arangam, Yatrik and Madras Players. I have been pursuing translation of good poetry from Tamil to English and vice versa plus a few in Hindi as a passion. Over the years, my poetry has been featured on television, various magazines and in an anthology of poems for children. Four volumes of Tamil poems, including two this year, by four different poets translated by “moi”s have been published.

WILD PARROTS

My hands

wild parrots

flying over flying along

vibrating wires electric

chasing notes

high and low

back and forth

power chords

to the beat of wings

shapes and phrases

repeating patterns

until my fingers bleed

I play by ear

mimic the strings I hear

without understanding

how I set these colors free

how I painted the sky with song

for my turtledove

for her love

for her warm round of applause

I play my hollow heart out

oh so joyfully

Stefan Bohdan: He lives in Orlando, Florida, USA. He is retired from the architectural/engineering/construction world. He now spends his time writing poems and novels. His English poems have been published in multiple books, anthologies, journals, newspapers, e-zines and translated into Persian (Farsi), Arabic, Urdu, Nepali, Hindi, Bengali, Estonian, French, Spanish, old Japanese, Dutch, Afrikaans, Turkish, Italian, Malayalam, Assamese, Tamil, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, Hebrew, Filipino, Hiligaynon, Kinaray-a, and Albanian. He also writes reviews for poetry books. He is internationally published and has collaborated with poets, translators and artists from around the world. He is the founder of Third Eye Butterfly Press.

PORTRAIT

The Portrait is not like me.

It’s only a captured image someone sees.

Someone looking back will set my soul free.

When the glass starts to crack.

My inner beauty will come back.

Stephen Goetz: I’m a published poet from Lincoln City, 0regon, USA. My poems have been published in poetry groups. I have received awards from Motivational Strips and affiliate groups. I have been published for the first time in an anthology. I’m a regular contributor to Glomag, an anthology published in India.

YOU ARE ALWAYS BEING WATCHED

Watch your steps women

YOU are being watched

Your red lipstick is a call of the slut

Your short dress invites trouble

Oh! You dare to go out alone at night

then you are asking for it.

Your sass and your chutzpah is flagrant

You dare to question?

Why you want to get slapped and pulled by your hair

And at night when you are ravaged why that defines your purpose

you are born only to serve

Do you dare to say NO!

Why then have yourself disfigured

Do you still want to show your preferences

That would be your deliverance into another realm

Remember you are a package

Neatly trafficked in neat tutored bundles

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high”*

That is for the other half

to terrorize to torment to spread toxicity.

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high”

—this line is from Rabindra Nath Tagore’s poem.

Sudeshna Mukherjee: Sudeshna Mukherjee's poems deal with varied human nature. A keen observer, she chronicles the happenings around her and writes with a tinge of humour. ‘Meanderings of the Mind’ and ‘Mélange’ are her published collections of poems. She loves 'words' and loves to play with them.

I AM THE INTERVAL

I am the interval

In between you and muse,

Give me some times

To come out from the latest anguish.

I am the interval

To get closer to you,

The inseparable bondage between you and me

Could only be felt by a few.

I am the interval

In between life's thorny paths and necessities

You are one and only that

Inspires and motivates to form strong ideologies.

I am the interval

To reappear to you in a new fresh form,

Love, care and bless me

To feel and realise you in the usual norm.

Sujata Paul: She is a trilingual poetess residing in Tripura. By profession, she is a teacher. She is a Founder of Creative Tripura. She has published three poetry books. She has been published in special anthologies. She has been conferred Sahitya Academy Award, 2020 by Gujrat Sahitya Academy in collaboration with the #MotivationalStrips, Literoma Nari Samman Award, 2020, Most Influential Women Award, 2020 by The Spirit Mania, and the Literary Excellence Award by Suryodaya Literary Foundation, 2020.

HE WAS NOT THERE

Wrapped in beguiling dreams

she clung to sleep

the night still had remnants of dark and deep

Her awakening was filled with horror

as she took a close look at her

In the wall mounted mirror

With eyes swollen, head shaven

she looked more like waxen faced

gone was the charm of her demeanor

she struggled for speech, but could hardly utter

her entire body ached, was filled with torpor

the cute blushing mermaid of yore

had been reduced by then to a jarring footnote

A knock on the door

and the doctor was the first visitor

“You are lucky to have survived the fatal accident dear!”

“We are sorry...we could not.”

she could guess the rest

her heaves and sobs filled the room with noise

Her flooded eyes... frantically looked for the one

he was not there to console

nor to hold her hands.

Sujata Dash: She is a poet from Bhubaneswar, Odisha. She is a retired banker. She has one published poetry anthology (More than Mere—a bunch of poems published by Authorspress) to her credit. She is a singer and an avid lover of Nature. She regularly contributes to anthologies worldwide.

KESARI CAKE

An orangeish mound,

The colors popping out from a distance,

Delicious looking, cashews peeping here and there…

The Kesari cake, made by my mother,

In express speed, as a surprise…

Giving off the rich aroma

Of Sooji cooked in milk and ghee,

Purple grapes tucked around to create a border…

Cheap red cherries arranged to form,

A tempting centre piece…

Tiny coloured candles added light and glitter…

The special table-cloth

Spoke of love and care:

My sixteenth birthday cake!

Just the three of us, two daughters and a mother…

Who could not afford a proper birthday cake…

Yet, years later, when my birthday

Was celebrated beneath chandeliers,

With laughter and applause and cameras,

I look at the grand huge cake, with fresh cream,

And all I could see in my mind's eye

Was the image of that Kesari cake:

And I say, “That was the best birthday cake,

I ever had, and will ever have!”

Kamar Sultana Sheik: She is a poet, writing mostly on themes of spirituality, mysticism, and nature with a focus in Sufi Poetry. Her professional career spanning 18 years has been in various organizations and Institutions including the IT sector. She is a self-styled life coach and has currently taken a break to focus on her writing full-time. Sultana has contributed to various anthologies and won several prizes in poetry contests. A green enthusiast, blogger and content-writer, Sultana calls herself a wordsmith.

A CUP OF TEA

A warm cup of tea

For U either for me

Turn a passive mood in glee

So I would like to offer thee!

In a sunny morning

Or a gloomy evening

A cup of tea is always rejuvenating!

If U don’t like tea

U are an exception

It’s an integral part of reception.

To abide a health chart without tea

No! It’s not my cup of tea.

It’s not so much intoxicating

Rather relaxing and relieving!

Yet if U think it’s a tempest in a tea cup

No dear it’s a tribute to tea on my behalf!

Sumana Bhattacharjee: She is a bilingual poetry writer from India. She was born and brought up in Kolkata in a family of teachers. From childhood she has had a keen interest in music, poetry and drama. She is a published poet and the founder of an online poetry group “World Of Poetry And Prose.” Her poems have been published in more than 25 national and international anthologies, blogs and ezines. She is very passionate about poetry and she wants to spread the essence of love and peace through her poems around the world.

AND EVER AFTER

Dedicated to my son and his wife, the newlyweds

Balmy breezes rippled
swaying palms reveled celebrated
swirling, twirling, youth bursting
into bouquets of joys !!
A pair of bulbuls,
mates for life, trilled melodies,
two fragrant rosebuds blushed
sipping starry spring
fountains in the other's eyes,
ecstasy danced, swirled, twirled,
youth burst
into bouquets of joys !!
Love's magic was in the air
heavens descended,
showering gold and silver
of Divine blessings

of love,

of faith,

of trust,

respect, understanding

infinite togetherness.

The hour was auspicious

as flames of devotion

melded two hearts

bond for lives ever after !!!

12th November, ‘21

Sunil Kaushal: Dr. Sunil is an awarded author, a gynecologist, and a trilingual writer whose work has been translated several languages. Her memoirs ‘Gypsy Wanderings & Random Reflections’ won The Nissim Award given by Nissim Ltd., awarded by The Significant League (International). She has received several other awards. Stickypins bestowed her with the title of Quillmaster. She was featured in the Limca Book of Records. Her poems find a place in The Golden Book of World Records. She is the winner at YoAlfaaz. She is a Gold medalist in Dramatics. Her varied interests and hobbies keep her in love with life and active at 76, yoga being the fuel.

STORIES

Betwixt hope and hopelessness

dawn and dusk

dusk and dawn

sunsets

sunrises

ebbing

and surging

—a small universe

a cosmos, big!

Some new dreams

Some old, broken

discarded

…a fresh canvas.

Sunil Sharma: Sunil Sharma, a writer-freelance-academic from Mumbai, India, has published 22 books, solo and joint. He edits ***Setu.***

http://www.setumag.com/p/setu-home.html

http://www.drsunilsharma.blogspot.in/

A LESSON IN SELF LOVE

I opened the tea cupboard
took out the most expensive tea
and poured me a cup
of that warm, gurgling beverage
which I always served to others

that room with a view
of the rose garden
with expensive upholstery
I stepped in
removed the sheets
which covered it
and sat down
breathing in—the rosy fragrance

I wore that expensive saree
kept for special occasions

when meeting someone important

today was the day

and now the minute

to meet me—

the most important person!

Sunita Singh: She is a bi-lingual poet and writer, writing in English and Hindi. Her poems feature in Indian and International Anthologies and e-magazines. Many of her poems have won awards on on-line forums like Kaafiya, Poetry Planet, The Significant League, etc. A few of her Hindi poems have also been turned into lyrics for private albums. She is an active member of Katha Kathan, a forum for reviving Indian languages. She lives in Delhi and is fond of travelling, music, and reading. She finds inspiration from Nature.

DEPARTURE

Autumn and twilight

A lethal duo—

The drums beat a different rhythm

The ‘Shiuli’ which bloomed at morn

Now strewn on the mud and earth

Her footsteps

In retreat…

Vermilion and splashes of red

Conches and murmured prayers

Rituals

The culmination of those four days

Embodying every commoner’s dream

Of escape…or fulfillment

Earth and Water…

Timeless companions

Even in Her immersion

All that was divine and pure

Now return to Nature

The Elements…

Harmony…Symphony…Sonata

An orchestrated end

Or a synchronized prelude…

Supatra Sen: Dr. Supatra Sen, currently Associate Professor in a reputed Kolkata college, is a veteran academician, teaching and researching in the fields of Botany and Environment. Her international books, papers and reviews are chiefly in her professional subject. She has edited several UGC-funded ISBN volumes and is also the founder and Chief Editor of an ISSN peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary academic journal 'Harvest' since 2016. Though her tryst with poetry writing is brief, she is a published poet.

THE COTTAGE

rain falling from heavens above
succumb my heart with your love
you sheltered me from falling tears
turning away the past full of fears
a love behold, stood steadfast with time
in stillness within my words does rhyme
though remained unspoken and hidden
in the silence of destined fate forbidden
a heart in dwelling place alone and lonely
in the wonder, woodlands waited solely
the cottage that holds the story untold
were reminiscence of memories unfold
I'll be here waiting till the end of twilight
with the rustling of trees and dripping rain
till the sun shines in the brightest light
I will behold the love to tell without refrain

Suzette Portes San Jose: She was born and raised in Cebu City, Philippines. She was born with a passion for writing and living in her art forms. She now has joined 23 book anthologies internationally. She is also a recipient of multiple awards for her ART works and Literary works. She also founded her own Poetry Group of artists and poets writing Ekphrastic Poetry. She is also a founder of Artist Kids charity project all for free. She is also a Publisher and is now publishing her own book along with other book anthologies of her group.

LIFE IS NOT A BED OF ROSES

From the day you were born there was a challenging road ahead of you, winding and steep, uphills and downhills.

Your sensitivity made you understand nuances of people's different emotions.

You knew instinctively when others needed a comforting hug.

You were curious about everything in life and asked why the bumblebee buzzed,

How many fish are in the oceans and number of birds in the sky.

To find out how an alarm clock worked, you picked it apart.

Your mother couldn't help but laugh, even though the clock was broken.

You become a rebellious teenager who stumbled and fell. You learned from your mistakes, you became a smart and charming, young man. Unfortunately you struggled with depression and unhealed trauma, and learned that life is not a bed of roses.

Svanhild Løvli: She is a billingual Poetess, currently residing in Gjøvik, Norway. She is a freelance translator and in her spare time she also loves to draw and photograph. She is concerned with family life, nature conservation and gender equality. She is a regular contributor to GloMag. She is published in anthologies like Autunis Poetry, Poetry Planet and Antologia Serbia (2021) Her poems have been translated into Polish, Swedish, Italian, Serbian and Hindi.

MAGICAL MOMENTS

Look for the love in every moment

Every moment is here to stay.

It becomes a part of your memories

And can take you back a long way.

Moments of joy, moments of pain.

Moments of love over again.

Moments that last, moments that pass

Make up our life and its casts.

Each passing moment

Takes a part of our time.

That we are to spend

On this beautiful land.

So look for the love in every moment.

And make it a memorable one.

Celebrating life as an event

Let the magical lamp of love burn.

Uma Agarwal Bajaj: I am a Company Secretary by qualification, a homemaker by choice (since the last 20 years) and a budding businesswoman. Having been occupied with family and kids, I have recently realised that I have the ability to pen some of my thoughts. I write both in English and Hindi and hope to be better myself with each passing day. I read fiction whenever I get some time. Apart from this, I love to cook and have a fascination for gardening (in my balcony).

DREAMING OF SPRING

Under tickling mist of a morning drizzle,
clouds a high pearlescent ceiling
across the lapping silver water,
Hope rose like a looming cliff

Drops began to fall with a soft pitter-patter,
rippling the surface of the river;
Gazing down into the black, slow-moving depths,
where drifted fragments of a broken moon,
branches of tress brush my face with blossom

A soft agitation of wings caresses my cheek;
the air breathing from the well-nigh spring sky,
bore a voice which whispered…
I will lift you on the wings of Hope

Val Smit: VaL Smit is a South African artist and poet based in Cape Town. She writes ekphrastic poetry per artwork created and uses various media in portraying images that she feels fitting to deliver the message of the words she pens down. She focuses on the inner turmoil experienced by our disconnectedness from Nature and each other. Her work has been published in various online journals including GloMag India, The Chachalaca Review, The West Review, The Raconteur Review, Literary Garland and Valiant Scribe.

A FLASHBACK SUMMER

The month of May mocks me

And asks me

Where are those summer flowers that poets spoke of?

What of the tree that gave the historic voyager his shade?

Who axed its branches and gifted us this concrete maze…

Those fluttering breezes are now the stuff of folklore

Those languid midsummer nights

Where nervous lovers explored new contours

Those homemade lemon khus sorbets

And stolen beals and jamuns

Where vanished the lazy charpoy?

And nocturnal gossip on terraces…

I have no answers for a baffled May

A lame apology for this urban jungle

Sans verdant green lush

As the sun flirts on the western horizon

My temples throb with pain

Longing for an Indian summer of yore

I make my way home

Vandana Kumar: She is a Middle School French teacher in New Delhi, India. An educator with over 20 years of experience, she is also a French translator and recruitment consultant. Her poems have been published in various national and international journals and websites. She has been featured in anthologies like Houston, Texas-based – 'Harbinger Asylum', US-based 'Kali Project' of Indie Blu(e) Publishing, etc. She has been part of two projects of the World literature series on Post-modern voices and critical thought. She also writes articles on cinema that have appeared on websites and journals like 'Just-cinema', 'Daily Eye', 'The Free Press Journal', Boloji.com and The Artamour.

TIME, THE PLAYWRIGHT

At curtains down, I am but an actor

My part in the play, a cursory snippet

In audience memory, the reminiscence

Lasting merely until

Another drama begins, another actor takes my place

But strut I must the length of the stage

Articulating dialogues with character

Emoting passions with conviction

For, evanescent though my role

I am, in my time

In Time's spotlight, pivotal to the Great Play

Vidya Shankar: I am a widely published Indian poet, writer, editor, blogger, English teacher, and a "book" in the Human Library. The author of two poetry books, I have received several literary awards and recognitions. One of my poems has been published in the first ever Yearbook of Indian Poetry in English, 2020-21. I have been featured in a unique coffee table book, '50 Inspiring Women boys and girls should read about, Chennai Edition'. I find meaning to my life through yoga and mandalas.

ANOTHER LYRIC FOR YOU

As we sat on the beach, holding our breath

We saw twilight clutch at

Straws of sunlight - -

Our names struggled against

The receding tide

But our bodies recited chapter and verse

All through that frog-croaking, sweat-soaked night - -

Our pauses grew swollen with guilt

Not knowing that the answers we sought

Were locked within

Beyond our insights - -

Let us remix shared memories

And search for the right key

For the misplaced lyrics of our story:

Not always in black and white.

Vijay Nair: I retired as an Associate Professor of English and I was awarded the Reuel International Prize for Writing & Literature in the year 2016. I was the 'Critic of the Year' in 2016, 2017 & 2018 at Destiny Poets, UK and was also adjudged the 'Poet of the Year' in 2018 by the same poetry group. Three of my poems have been included in the PG syllabus of BBMK University, Dhanbad.

TREE TALE

I heard a tale yesterday

A belief, they say that the greatest sinners are reborn as

Trees.

Rooted, unable to move

Bearing mute witness to everything

Good and bad

Unable to respond

Often struck down, helpless

Natural justice

To atone for their wrong doings.

I cried

Only saints can be trees.

It isn't easy to be one

Christ was a tree, Buddha too

And Krishna who didn't war.

Only man’s arrogance could

Cook up such a story.

We know how difficult it is to be calm

To still our thoughts, our flights of fancy

Our misunderstandings, our love and hatred

Which are inseparable realities

And we think it is stupid.

We destroy mindlessly in our intelligence.

Sinner or not, I wish I could be

A tree

Vineetha Mekkoth: She is a poet, writer, translator and editor from Calicut, Kerala. She works as State Tax Officer in the State GST Department. She has translated for the Kerala Sahitya Academy and has also contributed articles for the Malayalam Literary Survey, a quarterly brought out by the academy. She has published poems and short stories in various anthologies. She is co-editor of two anthologies. Her debut poetry collection 'Ashtavakra and Other Poems' published in August 2017 is available on Amazon. Her latest work titled 'Penpiravi-Birth of A Woman' is the translation of the Malayalam poet Girija Pathekkara's poetry collection published by Authorspress, New Delhi (October, 2021)

A REVERIE

Four old mates from the past

Sitting round a tiny, rickety table

In a room equally tiny

Each ensconced in an arm chair

With a dim light upon them thrust

Each with a glass in hand

Half filled with whisky

Half with memories.

Lost they are in a trance

Leading them all to a reverie

Of days spent at their alma mater

Opening a basket of anecdotes fond

As if they were in a class with a professor

They used to call a morphine

Inducing the students to doze off

And feel utterly sore.

Things changed in more ways than one

Not the least their camaraderie

Time drove them apart

Failing to be a wall in the love

Each feels for the other in heart.

Zulfiqar Parvez: He is the Head of English at Tanzimul Ummah International Tahfiz School, Dhaka. He has done his Honours and Masters in English Language and Literature from the University of Rajshahi.